

October 3, 2004 by Steve Brandon



Reasons to Worship Jesus

Matthew 21:1-11

1. Because of His Saving Plan (verse 1).
2. Because He is the King (verses 2-8).
3. Because He is the Savior (verse 9).
4. Because You Know Him (verses 10-11).

As we have been stepping through the gospel of Matthew, we have seen how Jesus often spoke in parables. He often tells a story about everyday things, like planting (Matt. 13:1-9; 18-23), harvesting (Matt. 13:24-30; 36-43), finding treasure (Matt. 13:44-45), fishing (Matt. 13:47-50), working (Matt. 20:1-16), obedient & disobedient sons (Matt. 21:28-32), feasting (Matt. 22:1-14), and fruit-bearing (Matt. 24:32). The point of the stories is that they illustrate some truth of the kingdom of heaven. In one parable, different types of soils represent how the preached word is received in the hearts of men (Matt. 13:1-9; 18-23). In another parable, a treasure represents the immense value of eternal life with Jesus (Matt. 13:44-45). In one parable, a fisherman divided the good fish from the bad fish, representing judgment (Matt. 13:47-50). We read about a marriage feast which represents the pleasures of heaven (Matt. 22:1-14). We also read about a fig plant that was ready to be picked and how that represented the nearness of the kingdom (Matt. 24:32).

These stories are pictures that help us to see and understand that nature of the kingdom of heaven. And yet, as these parables were taught, not everyone understood. There were some who understood the truths of the parables, and received it and rejoiced in it. There were others who didn't understand the truth of the parables, and they were left in their darkness. In fact, that is the purpose for Jesus speaking in parables: **to reveal the truth and to hide the truth at the same time**. When the disciples asked Jesus why He spoke to the multitudes in parables, Jesus replied, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing, they do not hear, nor do they understand" (Matt. 13:11-13).

There are events that took place in the life of Jesus and Israel that have a significance that goes beyond the actual event itself. Last week, we saw the two blind men who were healed. Those who hadn't seen Jesus, finally see Jesus. And those who had seen Jesus, did not really "see" Jesus. In many ways, this was a living parable that would anticipate the Passion week. Those who should have seen and received Jesus didn't. We read in 1 Cor 2:7-8, "We speak God's wisdom ... which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

I invite you to open your Bibles to Matthew, chapter 21, where we will see a living parable. I should also note that we will see living parables again next week when we look at the cleansing of the temple and the cursing of the fig tree. As Jesus cleansed the temple of the money changers who were profiting in their work in the temple, it also gives insight into how the entire temple/sacrifice system will be reformed. With the fig tree, we will see how representative this tree is of Israel: what should have born fruit, didn't.

This morning, we will look at the first eleven verses of this chapter, which describe what took place when Jesus entered Jerusalem, some 2,000 years ago. He entered the holy city riding upon a donkey. As He rode, He received the praise of men. These verses describe what is often called, "The Triumphal Entry." In many ways, the people were doing what they ought to have done. They worshiped Jesus as the coming Savior! And yet, in many ways, many of the people had little idea of what they were doing. D. A. Carson put it well. He said, "The ride on a colt, because it was planned, could only be an acted parable, a deliberate act of symbolic self-disclosure for those with eyes to see, or after the Resurrection, with memories by which to remember and integrate the events of the preceding weeks and years" (The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 8, p. 437). With that in mind, let's take a look at our text this morning.

Matthew 21:1-11

And when they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "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. And if anyone says something to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." Now this took place that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, 'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.'" And the disciples went and did just as Jesus had directed them, and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid on them their garments, on which He sat. And most of the multitude spread their garments in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees, and spreading them in the road. And the multitudes going before Him, and those who followed after were crying out, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!" And when He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?" And the multitudes were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee."

As I have studied this text this week, I have come up with only one central application for us this morning. Here it is: **Worship Jesus**. My sermon is entitled, "**Reasons to Worship Jesus**." It's why Jesus came to Jerusalem: to be worshiped. It is what the people were doing: they were worshiping Him. Worshiping Jesus is what our church is about. You may notice on the inside of the church bulletin there is a statement that says this: "We are pleased that you have joined us this morning to worship Jesus Christ." Worshiping Jesus is what we do. We worship Jesus. I don't think that we do so perfectly. Our worship is imperfect. Only when we receive our glorified, sinless bodies, we will be able to worship perfectly, and join the saints say with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" (Rev. 5:12). I think that we have much room to grow in this area. I believe that our sin holds us back. I believe that my feeble preaching holds you back. The quality of our music may hold you back. (I'm praying for people to come and help with our music). But my heart has been for us to make clear attempts at focusing our worship services upon Christ and Him crucified.

Too often Christian churches can simply talk about "God" in the most generic sense of the word so that a faithful Muslim or Jew would be comfortable. Our world needs to see a distinction between Christians, Muslims, and Jews because we don't worship the same God. We don't worship a generic "God." Here at Rock Valley Bible Church, we worship the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And the way that we are enabled to approach God is through His Son. And the role of the Spirit is to glorify the Son.

This morning, I want to give you four reasons why you ought to worship Jesus.

1. Because of His Saving Plan (verse 1).

I get this from verse 1, "And when they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethpage, to the Mount of Olives."

As we know from our previous studies of Matthew, Jesus had planned for quite some time to come to Jerusalem. On several occasions, Jesus had told His disciples that they were headed to Jerusalem. In Matthew 16:21, Jesus "began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day." A few chapters later, Jesus said almost the same thing, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up" (Matt. 20:18-19).

I want to remind you that each time that Jesus said that they were heading up to Jerusalem, He had a specific purpose in mind. He was coming to Jerusalem to suffer at the hands of sinful men, to die upon the cross, and to rise again. His death had a purpose. His death was a redemptive death. His death was a saving death. When Jesus died, He paid the price for our sins. When we place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, God no longer looks at us and sees a sinner. Rather, God looks at us and sees Jesus. This is marvelous news!

If you want proof for this, it is in the resurrection from the dead. When Jesus resurrected from the dead, it was a declaration to the world that God the Father accepted the sacrifice of God the Son. That's what Paul told those in Athens, "God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having **furnished proof** to all men, by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). When Jesus said that He was headed to Jerusalem, He always said it was to suffer, and die, and rise again.

This is what drives us as a church. We are driven by the cross of Christ. As we think about His love for us in dying in our place, we are drawn to worship Jesus. As we think about His saving plan of suffering for us, we can do nothing but love Him and worship Him. It's the cross that drove Paul to say that he would glory in nothing, but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 6:14). It's the cross that drove Paul to preach nothing other than Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). It's the mighty cross that drives us as a church to worship Jesus.

And so, I believe that it is of great importance for us to meditate upon the glories of His work upon the cross. It is important to experience His mercy to us on a daily basis. It is important to sing and pray and hear and obey as an overflow of our love for Jesus and what He has done for us.

Now, the day that Jesus entered Jerusalem was a crucial day in the saving plan of Jesus. It was the day in which Jesus fully revealed who He was to the nation of Israel. In many ways, this makes it was a turning point in His life. For several years Jesus had kept a veil over His true identity. He didn't broadcast to the world of who He was in a clear manner. Oh, certainly, there were clues. Anyone who heard His teaching could have discerned how Jesus set Himself apart from all teachers both in what He said and did and in who He claimed to be. Anyone who beheld His miracles could have understood that Jesus had extra-worldly power. But, many of those things Jesus veiled to the people.

It was important to Jesus that the truth about Him not spread too quickly. You read through the gospel of John and you get the idea that Jesus was waiting for "His hour" to come before He would fully reveal Himself. In fact, there were times in which Jesus told those near Him to be quiet about what they were learning. When it was revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus "warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ" (Matt. 16:20). When Peter, James and John saw Jesus transfigured on the high mountain, Jesus told them to "tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead" (Matt. 17:9).

But on this day, it all changes. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, it was time to reveal Himself clearly to the world. Those in Jerusalem would acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, who has come to save His people from their sins. He was revealing His Saving Plan. We also ought to worship Jesus, ...

2. Because He is the King (verses 2-8).

If you remember from last week, Jesus approached Jerusalem from the east, from Jericho, where He had healed the two blind men. To make the trip, Jesus ascended up the Wadi Qilt -- some 3,000 feet in elevation above Jericho. When Jesus reached the peak of His ascent, He would find Himself at the top of the Mount of Olives, which is really more of a ridge than it is a mountain. It sits about 100 feet above

Jerusalem. It provides a great panoramic view of the entire city. Now, Jesus could have entered Jerusalem in much the same way that He had entered many times before. He could have simply walked into the city. However, this time it was different. Jesus wanted to make a special entrance to **display His kingship**. He wanted to so enter Jerusalem in a manner that would make it clear to all who He claimed to be. He claimed to be the king! He claimed to be the Messiah!

We get some of the details of His preparation in verse 2, where He told two of His disciples, "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." Jesus sent His disciples on a scavenger hunt to find a couple of donkeys. One donkey would be fully grown. The other would be a colt, which is a young donkey. Jesus sent them into a nearby village to find these animals that were probably on the outskirts of the village since Jesus said they would immediately find them.

I believe that the disciples would have felt a bit uneasy about this. I mean, you don't just go to someone's house and take their donkey without a reason. You don't go to someone's house and find their bicycle leaning alongside the house and take it. Even if you are Jesus, you don't break the 8th commandment by stealing. Perhaps this is why Jesus adds his next bit of instructions to them (in verse 3), "And if anyone says something to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." I'm not sure about you, but I would be pretty apprehensive about this whole endeavor if I was one of these two disciples. Nevertheless, in verses 6 and 7, we read that "the disciples went and did just as Jesus had directed them, and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid on them their garments, on which He sat." They walked into the village. Immediately they found the donkey and the colt just like Jesus had told them that they would.

The gospel of Mark fills in some details for us here. Mark tells us that when the disciples went to get the colt, "some of the bystanders were saying to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?'" (Mark 11:5). And the disciples spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission (Mark 11:6). Everything went exactly according to plan. Now, some will say that these things took place just as Jesus had spoken because Jesus had made prior arrangements with the owner of these donkeys. Perhaps that was the case. Perhaps Jesus knew the owner of the house in some capacity. When he heard that Jesus needed the animals, of course he would have let Jesus have them. That might have been the case, but we don't know for sure. I believe that this was a display of the sovereignty of Jesus. He knew that the donkeys would be there; and they were. He knew that His disciples would be questioned; and they were. Jesus was in control of this entire situation. He knew what would take place during the week. He knew that Jerusalem was the place to enter. He knew that the cross was the place where His life would end. He knew how He was to enter Jerusalem seated on this borrowed colt. It all happened as Jesus knew it would.

Jesus is a sovereign king! It makes Him worthy of our worship!

There was a reason why Jesus told His disciples to retrieve this donkey. It was to fulfill prophecy. That is what verse 4 says, "Now this took place that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled." The prophecy comes from the prophet, Zechariah 9:9, which Matthew records for us in verse 5, "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your King is coming to you, Gentle, and mounted on a Donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"

If you would take some time to read this verse in its context, you would discover that God is declaring His wrath against the neighboring nations of Israel, while declaring His protection for the house of Israel in that He has provided a King for them. If you have been reading with us in our daily Bible reading, you will have had a taste of what this was like. Our reading this week took us through the first half of Isaiah, where the Lord pronounces His judgment upon the wicked and unbelieving cities and nations. In Isaiah 13, judgment is against Babylon. In Isaiah 14, it is against Assyria and Philistia. In Isaiah 15 and 16 it is against Moab. In Isaiah 17, it is against Damascus. In Isaiah 18, it is against Ethiopia. In Isaiah 19, it is against Egypt. In Zechariah 9, we read that though other cities (like Damascus, Tyre, Sidon, Ashkelon, Gaza, and Ekron) would set up their fortresses and rise and be strong, the LORD told Israel to rejoice, for their rightful King was on his way to deliver Israel. It is He who would establish peace (Zech. 9:10). And the people of Israel were to be on the lookout for such a king. He would come and ride on a "colt, the foal of a donkey." All of the ancient Rabbis who read Zechariah agreed that it was referring to the Messiah who would come and deliver Israel (see Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p. 730).

To us today, it may seem like a strange thing that a king would enter a city like this. We install our leaders a bit differently. In a few months, (on January 20th, 2005), the United States of America will formally install our president for the next four years. Either George W. Bush or John Kerry will ride in a limousine along a parade route that ends at the West Front of the U.S. Capitol, where they will say the following words, "I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." This is the way in which we as a nation inaugurate our presidents. We don't parade our presidents on a donkey.

In some sense, the use of a donkey to transport a king was a bit foreign to Israel as well. As I searched the scripture, I didn't find any kings being installed by riding on a donkey, except for one. It took place in the dying days of king David. Adonijah, one of David's sons, conspired to make himself the king as David was on his deathbed. To do so, Adonijah prepared for himself "chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run before him." He sacrificed sheep and oxen (1:9). In so doing, Adonijah had declared himself to be king (1:11). When it came about that Nathan heard of this, he spoke to Bathsheba (1:11), "Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king, and David our lord does not know it?" Nathan told Bathsheba to go to King David and ask, "Have you not, my lord, O king, sworn to your maidservant, saying, 'Surely Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne?' Why then has Adonijah become king?" (1:13). So King David responded and said, (1:33), "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have my son Solomon ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there as king over Israel, and blow the trumpet and say, 'Long live King Solomon.'"

The sign of Solomon riding the mule was a sign of his authentic kingship over Israel. So also, is Jesus' ride into Jerusalem a sign of His claim to the sovereign kingship over Israel. But, isn't it interesting that Adonijah sought to declare Himself king by gathering horses and chariots as a demonstration of power. This is how the world (including the United States) likes to install kings. Think about the time in which Prince Charles is ever installed as king of England. What type of ceremony do you think this would be? I imagine Prince Charles taking a grand parade through the streets of England, clothed with royal apparel. When the moment comes for him to be crowned king, he is wearing some of the most elaborate, jewel-studded clothing that has ever been made. The scepter in his hand is pure gold and covered with rubies and diamonds and other precious gems. This is how we install kings!

Isn't it interesting that when God would install a king, He would do so in such a humble manner. This ought to tell us a little bit about the manner of the Messiah. **Jesus is a humble king! It makes Him worthy of our worship!** When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, it wasn't in an awesome display of power. It wasn't a great display of honor. That will happen someday at His ultimate coronation. But here, when the two donkeys were placed before Him to ride into the city, Jesus chose the smaller of the two. He came "even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden" (verse 5). Mark tells us that no one had ever sat upon this colt (Mark 11:2), probably because the colt had never been big enough.

This whole demeanor was recorded by Zechariah, who said that the king would come, "*Gentle*, and mounted on a donkey" (verse 5). It's the idea that Jesus is coming meekly and humbly and lowly. This is consistent with everything that we know about Jesus. Being high and lofty and exalted, and deserving of all of our praise and worship, He chose the lowly path. He washed the feet of His disciples (John 13:5). He became a servant to all (Matt. 20:28). He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even a despised death like one on the cross. (Phil. 2:8).

I love how Jesus made sure that He entered the city in accordance with this prophecy. In some ways, this prophecy is different than many of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled on other occasions. In this prophecy, Jesus took an active role to see that He entered Jerusalem in accordance with Zechariah 9:9, seeking out a donkey on which to make His entrance into Jerusalem. There were other prophecies in which Jesus appears to be passive in their fulfillment. Consider the virgin birth (Matt. 1:23). Consider the form of His death "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." (Deut. 21:23 cf. Gal. 3:13). Consider the casting of lots for His garment by the Roman soldiers (John 19:34; Ps. 22:18). Consider His resurrection from the dead (Ps. 16:10).

But though Jesus may have appeared to be passive in these matters, the sovereign hand of God was very active in making sure that the prophecies were fulfilled exactly as had been prophesied. Prophecy isn't fulfilled by chance or by circumstance, but by sovereign exertion. **Jesus is God's choice for a king! It makes Him worthy of our worship!**

Jesus is the One of whom the prophecy anticipated. Notice that this prophecy in Zech. 9:9 is all about declaring the kingship of the Messiah. Look again at verse 5, "Behold your King is coming to you." Jesus was claiming to be the King of the Jews. This is nothing new. In fact, this is one of the main themes of Matthew: Jesus Christ is the King of the Jews. Matthew begins his gospel by recording the genealogy of Jesus Christ, which demonstrates that He was of the royal, kingly line of David. Matthew records in chapter 2 how the wise men came to visit this baby king and worship Him. When Jesus began to preach, His message was clear: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). Why was this the message that was preached? Because He, the king, was near.

In His famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks with the authority of a king, declaring that all men will account to Him someday (Matt. 7:22). His miracles of chapters 8 and 9 attest to His sovereign authority. When sending out His disciples to preach, Jesus told them to preach, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10:7), because Jesus is in their midst. His words constantly spoke about the nature of His kingdom, whether he was giving parables to describe the kingdom (chapter 13) or speaking about who is greatest in the kingdom (Matt. 18:1-4; 20:25-28).

At His crucifixion, the official charge against Jesus was placed above His head. The sign read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." (Matt. 27:37). In fact, the kingdom is mentioned over 50 times in Matthew. So, as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on this donkey, He was claiming to be the Messiah, the anointed King of the Jews! As He fulfilled the Scripture in every detail, it showed us that **Jesus proclaimed Himself to be a king!** And when you see how trustworthy He is, it makes Him worthy of our worship! The crowds that had gathered didn't miss this point. Look at what they did in verse 8, "And most of the multitude spread their garments in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees, and spreading them in the road."

There would have certainly been a large multitude in Jerusalem at this time. Jesus entered into Jerusalem only a week before the Passover took place. At this time, Jerusalem normally had a population of 30,000 people. But, during the Passover this swelled immensely. Josephus estimates that there would be more than 2,000,000 people in Jerusalem during this time (Josephus, Wars, 6:9:3). Gathering a crowd for this festive entrance into Jerusalem would hardly have been difficult. But, it's more than a crowd watching Jesus. These people spread their garments in the road (verse 8), as a display of their submission to Him as king. These people spread cut branches in the road. Both of these actions were clear acknowledgments to the fact that they understood that Jesus was entering Jerusalem as a King. In 2 Kings 9:13, when Jehu was anointed King, each man who declared him to be king "took his garment and placed it under him, and blew the trumpet, saying, 'Jehu is king!'" In the apocryphal book of 1 Maccabees (13:51), Simon and the Jews captured Jerusalem. Listen to what is written, "The Jews made their entry ... with acclamations and carrying palms, to the sound of harps, cymbals and zithers, chanting hymns and canticles, since a great enemy had been crushed and thrown out of Israel." In 2 Maccabees (10:7), when Maccabaeus and the Jews cleansed the temple, they also carried branches, leafy boughs and palms and offered hymns to "him who had brought the cleansing of his own Holy Place." Their actions demonstrated that Jesus was the king.

Jesus is a sovereign king! Jesus is a humble king! Jesus is God's choice for a king! Jesus proclaimed Himself to be a king! It makes Him worthy of our worship!

3. Because He is the Savior (verse 9).

This comes from verse 9, "And the multitudes going before Him, and those who followed after were crying out, saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!'"

The crowds had some understanding as to what was going on. They saw it as a great day of victory. They didn't understand in the fullest sense like we do today, but, nevertheless, they understood something about it. They understood that Jesus was identifying Himself as the King who was coming to save. In Luke's account of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, we are told that the people "supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately." (Luke 19:11). And we can understand this from their incredible expectation that they had of the Messiah coming to rescue them.

The Jews felt themselves to be an oppressed people. At the time of Christ, they Jewish people weren't free. They were under Roman rule, and thus they were ultimately subject to the Roman government. They were granted a measure of freedom, which allowed for a certain amount of self-government. For instance, when Jesus was put up for trial, He was first taken to Caiaphas, the high-priest. This is because they had some degree freedom with respect to judicial functions But, Jesus was ultimately sentenced by Pontius Pilate, who was the Roman governor over Israel at the time of Jesus. The Jews were dominated by the Romans, whose capitol was some 1500 miles away. The situation is not unlike what America experienced under British rule in the 1700's. As I recall my history textbooks, I remember that the big issue then was "no taxation without representation." The colonies in America resented the fact that England, who resided across the Atlantic, took our money to finance their war with France. It was the same issue for the Jews who lived in Jerusalem at the time. They didn't like the taxation of the Roman government. In fact in Matthew 22, Jesus is going to be questioned about the legitimacy of Jews paying Roman taxes, because the Jews hated the taxation. They were longing for deliverance under the oppression. So, when the Messiah steps on the scene, the Jewish people were hungry for freedom. The people "supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately" (Luke 19:11).

It's with good reason that they sang, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" These words come straight from Psalm 118. The Jews would have been very familiar with this Psalm. Often times at festivals, the Jewish people sang the Hallel (which is a Hebrew word that means "praise" -- like "Hallelujah"). The Hallel consists of Psalms 113-118. So, as they sang songs of praise to God, it was appropriate for them to sing portions of Psalm 118 when Jesus came into town. Perhaps this Psalm was on their hearts as they would sing these words each year in Jerusalem, a bit like how we sing our Christmas carols each December.

In the Hebrew, Psalm 118:25 reads, ... "Ana Adonai, Hoshia-na." When rendered into the Greek language in which they spoke, it became "Hosanna!" Translated, these words mean, "O LORD, do save, we beseech Thee." Or, as the ESV says so nicely, "Save us, we pray, O Lord!" The Jews in the crowd were praying for deliverance, which is exactly what Psalm 118 is about. It's about God's deliverance of His people. Psalm 118 is a Psalm of praise to the LORD for His saving ways. ^[1]

As Christ entered Jerusalem, the people were singing a prayer that the Son of David might save them! It is the very thing that Jesus did. Only He didn't do so in the way that the Jews wanted. And this is why the Triumphal Entry was a bit like a parable. They understood the statement that Jesus was making as He rode into Jerusalem. Perhaps some of those present connected His actions to Zechariah 9:9. But they didn't understand how He was going to save Israel. They were focused on a physical deliverer. They were focused on being set free from the bondage of the Roman Empire. But **Jesus had a far bigger plan in His mind**. It wasn't to rescue Israel from Roman bondage, a mere political deliverance, much like we are attempting to do in Iraq right now. Rather, it was to rescue sinners from the hell they deserved. A political deliverance is temporary, lasting a generation or two. A spiritual deliverance endures forever. A political deliverance can be accomplished by man in his strength. A spiritual deliverance can only be accomplished by God.

Jesus was establishing a spiritual kingdom. When you read Matthew 21 in the context of everything else that will take place in the rest of the book, you will clearly understand that His kingdom isn't a political kingdom. He hasn't come to reign over the here and now. When Jesus was standing before Pontius Pilate, the governor asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" (John 18:33). Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of the world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm" (John 18:36).

When Jesus died upon the cross, it was for sins. The Bible is abundantly clear about this. It is Christ, who has "died for our sins, once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). It is Christ, who "gave His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). It is Christ, who "has cancelled the certificate of debt against us, having nailed it to the cross" (Col. 2:14). It is Christ, who "redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). Can you say, Ps. 118:26, "blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" That's worshipping Jesus! The final reason that I want to point out for worshipping Jesus is ...

4. Because You Know Him (verses 10-11).

I get this from verses 10 and 11, "And when He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, 'Who is this?' And the multitudes were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.'"

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, it wasn't without effect. We read that the whole city was stirred. The idea here is that all of Jerusalem knew that something was taking place. It was the talk of the Passover. They didn't talk about the latest soccer match or the latest edict that Pontius Pilate made. They talked about what took place when the man entered the city on a donkey. But, they were stirred mostly in ignorance. They said, "Who is this?" By their answer, they demonstrated that they knew that something was up. They called Jesus "a prophet!" But they didn't know who Jesus really was. They only had this vague notion that Jesus was a prophet.

How different we are than they were. It was difficult for them to understand the magnitude of this occasion. It's why the public opinion poll of Jesus swayed so drastically within the passion week. They only understood Jesus in part. They saw that He was a king, but they didn't see what type of king He was. And yet we do. They say that hindsight is 20/20. We know that Jesus was the Messiah, coming to save! We know that He was the Anointed One, of whom the Scriptures had prophesied! We know that He was the Savior, coming to redeem from sin.

And so, I ask you, "Do You Worship Jesus Christ?"

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on October 3, 2004 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] Consider the following summary of Psalm 118, which pulls out the various verses that point to this salvation theme:

The Psalm begins with a declaration of thanks to the LORD, for His lovingkindness is everlasting (verses 1,2,3,4) - 4 times!

Verse 5, "From my distress I called upon the LORD; The LORD answered me."

Verses 6, 7, "The LORD is for me."

Verses 8, 9, "It is better to take refuge in the LORD," than in man or princes.

Verses 10,11,12, "In the name of the Lord, the nations will be cut off."

Verse 13, "The LORD helped me."

Verse 14, "The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation."

Verses 15, 16, "joyful shouting and salvation is in the tents of the righteous" because the LORD does valiantly.

Verses 17, 18, "I shall not die."

Verses 19-21, "Open to me the gates and I will enter in and give thanks to the LORD for He has become my salvation."