

**Title: Who Is This?**

**Text: Matt 21:1-11**

*We all love a good story. Novels and movies prove this.*

*Last Sunday night I got caught up in a movie late at night. I thought I'd only watch an hour of it and the next thing I knew, I had followed it to the end.*

Well, let me tell you that the Bible itself is the grandest of all stories. I'd be so bold to say there is no greater story than the one the Bible gives.

Of course, there are hundreds and hundreds of stories in the bible, but they are all pointing to the greatest drama of all history. The gospel story.

### **The grand drama of redemption!**

Over the next **three** times we are together, I'd like to tell the story of Jesus' road to our redemption. Rather at least the last leg of this journey.

Today we will focus on what is called the **"Triumphal Entry."**

This Friday at 6:30 pm, we will spend time at the foot of the cross of Christ.

Next Sunday we celebrate the dramatic resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead!

**Do you know what is interesting? In the gospel of...**

- **Matthew** - there are 28 chapters. The first 20 are on the life and ministry of Jesus. The last 8 chapters are on the last week of His life.
- **Mark** - 16 chapters of which 6 are dedicated to his last week
- **Luke** - 24 chapters of which the last 5 are dedicated to his last week
- **John** - 21 chapters of which the last 10 chapters are dedicated to his last week - almost half of John's gospel to the last week of the life of our Lord.

This should tell us something. That in this great drama, written by God himself, the events leading up to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus must be incredibly important if each Gospel writer spends such a great amount of time on the last week of Jesus.

So today, I want us to focus on the **Triumphal Entry** of Jesus. On the Presentation of the Messiah to the masses.

Jesus comes riding into Jerusalem on a donkey presenting Himself as the King of Israel.

To get started, let's look at Matthews account...

**Matthew 21:1-11 ESV**

*<sup>1</sup> Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." <sup>4</sup> This*

*took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, <sup>5</sup> “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.’ ” <sup>6</sup> The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. <sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup> Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> 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!” <sup>10</sup> And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” <sup>11</sup> And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”*

Now, this important part of the drama takes place on the Sunday before the crucifixion. This kicks off the most important week in History.

I will lay out a time of events for your consideration from my friend and professor, Dr. Douglas bookman. I’m deeply indebted to him for this information and for what I will show you today...

So, I have a question for you this morning. How did Jesus pull this off?

How did Jesus get, as Matthew just told us, *“the whole city stirred up and declaring, ‘Hosanna in the highest!’”*

How did He get the whole city to recognize him as Messiah?

Well, it didn’t just happen, there are things that the Lord did to get Him to this place in the drama.

Very important, genius actions the Lord did to get to the place where He fulfilled the hundreds of years old prophecy that the Messiah would...

#### **Matthew 21:5 ESV**

*<sup>5</sup> “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.’ ”*

Certainly, His whole earthly life was in preparation for this important moment. His teachings, preaching, prophecies, interactions with people, and miracles certainly propelled him toward the idea of being THE Messiah.

However, there were two events in particular that were crucial for the crowd to embrace Him as Messiah on that original Palm Sunday just six days before His brutal death on the cross.

Two Events Preparatory to the Passion Week...

#### **Event #1: Some Pharisees try to lure Jesus back to Jerusalem (Luke 13:31-35)**

- 1. Jesus Escapes Danger** - Ministering in the region beyond Jordan (Perea), where Jesus had fled to escape the dangers in Judea. Why was it dangerous in Judea? Jesus was saying and doing many inflammatory things to really rile up the Sanhedrinists (religious leaders). The last straw was [John 10:22-39](#) where Jesus claims to be God, and consequently, they pick up stones to stone him.

Just after this Jesus says the following...

**John 10:37–39 ESV**

*<sup>37</sup> If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; <sup>38</sup> but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” <sup>39</sup> Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands.*

So, he leaves and heads to Perea...

**2. The Danger Comes Looking for Jesus** - While teaching in Perea, Jesus is warned about Herod by some Pharisees; He rebukes them and laments the stubbornness of Jerusalem

- Some of those Sanhedrinists had come to Perea in an attempt to lure Jesus back to *Judea*, where they could more easily do Him harm.
- Jesus discerned the plot and refused to fall into their snare ([Luke 13:32,33](#)); then He mourned the hardness of the city of Jerusalem (13:34).

**Luke 13:31–34 ESV**

*<sup>31</sup> At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” <sup>32</sup> And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’ <sup>34</sup> 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!*

- Take a look at the next verse (13:35), and understand the promise Jesus made to those men at that time – several weeks *before* He came to Jerusalem for the Passover at which He would die!

**Luke 13:35 ESV**

*<sup>35</sup> Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ”*

**Event #2: The raising of Lazarus from the dead** ([John 11:1-44](#))

**1. To Bethany for the raising of Lazarus**

Note: This is the THIRD of 3 trips to Jerusalem on or near it during the 6 months immediately before the Passion Week (compare [John 7:1](#); [10:22](#)). This trip occurs sometime after the Feast of Dedication ([Jn 10:22](#)) and before the Feast of Passover ([John 12:1](#)).

**a. The miracle** ([Jn 11:1-44](#))

**John 11:38–44 ESV**

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup> When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." <sup>44</sup> The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

**b. The effect of the miracle (Jn 11:45-53)**

**i. The effect on some of the leaders of the Jews (11:45)**

**John 11:45 ESV**

<sup>45</sup> Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him,

**ii. The effect on the Pharisees / Sanhedrin (11:46-53)**

**John 11:46–53 ESV**

<sup>46</sup> but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. <sup>47</sup> So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. <sup>48</sup> If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." <sup>49</sup> But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup> Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." <sup>51</sup> He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. <sup>53</sup> So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

**iii. The effect on the movements of Jesus (11:54)**

**John 11:54 ESV**

<sup>54</sup> Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called **Ephraim**, and there he stayed with the disciples.

**2. Retreat to Ephraim (Jn 11:54)**

- a. At this point the travels of Jesus, with the exception of the final journey to His death at Jerusalem, are at an end.
- b. He holds back for a time in the little city of Ephraim, awaiting the time when He would go forth to be delivered up to death.

## Friday – Sunday (Triumphal Entry)

### **Background: Jesus' very carefully planned journey to Jerusalem for the Passover**

1. **Jesus and His disciples pass through Samaria and Galilee** - They intend to join the pilgrims traveling down the eastern side of the Jordan River, heading for Jerusalem to observe Passover

*Show map of Israel with [Luke 17:11](#)*

He is heading north on the ridge route so he can head south!

On the way, 10 lepers are healed ([Lk 17:11-19](#))

When they get to Galilee, they turn around and come back home via another route.

2. **Jesus and His disciples fall in with a band of Passover Pilgrims** - They travel with that multitude down the Jordan Rift toward Jerusalem; Jesus does much teaching and works some miracles along the way ([Lk 17:20 – 19:28](#); [Mk 10:1-52](#); [Mt 19:1 – 20:34](#))
3. **Jesus heads to Bethany** - The band of Passover pilgrims continue on to Jerusalem while Jesus detours and heads to Bethany.

## Friday/Saturday

1. **A quiet weekend at Bethany, in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus**

Note: concerning the location of the village of Bethany Jerusalem is outside the **Sabbath zone**.

2. **Jesus arrives in Bethany on FRIDAY afternoon -**

He arrives on Friday before Sabbath amidst an air of great excitement over His appearance in Jerusalem ([Jn 11:55-12:1](#))

***John 11:55–12:1 ESV***

*<sup>55</sup> Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. <sup>56</sup> They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?" <sup>57</sup> Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him. <sup>1</sup> Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.*

Note: Passover/The Feast of Unleavened Bread began the following week. Passover is once a year, Sabbath is once each week.

Because the Sabbath began at sundown on Friday, the multitude of pilgrims with whom Jesus had been traveling could not stop at Bethany; they had to go on into Jerusalem to find lodging. As they went into the city, they bore a very timely two-fold message to the masses gathering there:

- a. Jesus is coming to town for the feast.
  - b. He has to be the Messiah!
3. **Saturday Evening Jesus is Anointed for Burial** - Saturday evening (after Sabbath), Jesus is served a feast by the people of Bethany; Mary anoints Jesus and is rebuked by Judas, but Jesus defends Mary and scolds Judas ([Mt 26:6-13](#); [Mk 14:3-9](#); [Jn 12:2-8](#))

**John 12:2–8 ESV**

<sup>2</sup> So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. <sup>3</sup> Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup> But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup> “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” <sup>6</sup> He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup> For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”

- a. Because of that rebuke, Judas devises a sinister plot
- b. Judas goes to the chief priests to sell out Jesus for 30 pieces of silver ([Mt 26:14-16](#); [Mk 14:10,11](#); [Lk 22:3-6](#))

**Sunday: A Day of Messianic Presentation**

**Show Map from Bethany to the City of Jerusalem...**

1. **The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem as the promised and awaited Messiah** ([Mt 21:1-11](#); [Mk 11:1-11](#); [Lk 19:29-44](#); [Jn 12:9-19](#))

**John 12:9–19 ESV**

<sup>9</sup> When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup> So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, <sup>11</sup> **because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.** <sup>12</sup> The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” <sup>14</sup> And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, <sup>15</sup> “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!” <sup>16</sup> His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. <sup>17</sup> The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. <sup>18</sup> The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. <sup>19</sup> So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.”

Note: Background to the TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

a. **Old Testament prophets clearly foretold this event**

- i. [Zechariah 9:9](#) - the manner of the King's presentation had been foretold

**Zechariah 9:9 ESV**

*<sup>9</sup> 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.*

- ii. [Daniel 9:25,26](#) - the moment of the King's presentation had been foretold

**Daniel 9:25–26 ESV**

*<sup>25</sup> Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. ~~<sup>26</sup> And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed.~~*

- iii. [Psalm 118:21-29](#) - the meaning of the King's presentation had been foretold

**Psalm 118:21–29 ESV**

*<sup>21</sup> I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. <sup>22</sup> The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. <sup>23</sup> This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. <sup>24</sup> **This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.** <sup>25</sup> Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! <sup>26</sup> Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD. <sup>27</sup> 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! <sup>28</sup> You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you. <sup>29</sup> Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!*

b. **Remember - Jesus Himself had clearly foretold this event.**

Just several weeks earlier, after Jesus had fled from Judea because of the murderous designs of the Pharisees, when some of those Pharisees came to Perea to entice Jesus back to Judea that they might take Him, Jesus had clearly stated that the citizens of Jerusalem would "...not see me until the time come that you shall say, 'Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord'" ([Lk 13:31-35](#)).

The title of this sermon is a simple question - **Who is this?** And the simple answer is, **Jesus is King!**

c. **The King is coming!**

By traveling along the way to Jerusalem with a band of Jewish pilgrims, and by working miracles and rebuking the Pharisees along that way, and then by stopping in Bethany and allowing the pilgrims to precede Him into Jerusalem, Jesus had accomplished two very strategic victories:

- He had heightened the excitement and fascination of the people, laying the groundwork for their behavior at the TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.
- He had effectively frustrated the murderous intent of the Sanhedrinists (cp. [Jn 11:47-48](#), [53](#), [57](#); [Lk 19:47-48](#); [20:19](#)); those leaders of Judaism were anxious to arrest and execute Jesus, but could not because of His popularity with the multitudes.

*Note: that popularity was, to be sure, only superficial and self-serving, but it nonetheless had the effect of protecting Jesus from the Sanhedrinists, and Jesus utilized that reality again and again.*

d. The praises of the pilgrims as Jesus approaches the city – **Show map of city**

e. The Pharisees object to Jesus and He rebukes them ([Lk 19:39-44](#))

**Luke 19:39–44 ESV**

<sup>39</sup> And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." <sup>40</sup> He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." <sup>41</sup> And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, <sup>42</sup> saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on **this day** the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side <sup>44</sup> and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

f. Jesus returns quietly to Bethany ([Mt 21:17](#); [Mk 11:11](#))

NOTE: Bookman's Thoughts...

1. The decision as to what to do with Jesus now rests with the leaders of the Jews; He has made clear for all to see the substance of His claims concerning Himself and the proof of those claims.
2. It would have been easy for *us* to be deceived and to accept as genuine the words of acceptance offered by this multitude! However, subsequent events demonstrated the superficial - even, the hypocritical character of those words.
3. It was the pattern of Jesus' ministry to devise very practical and effective means to *test* the genuineness of the multitudes when they insisted that they were willing to accept Him as their Messiah
4. As He had done before, Jesus devised a "litmus test" to reveal the true character of the apparent acceptance by the multitudes at His triumphal entry.



What was that "litmus test"? It was Jesus' possession of the temple on the next two days - and the devastating verbal defeat and rebuke He administered to the religious/Levitical leaders of the nation during those days. In effect, he will, over Monday and Tuesday, lay down the gauntlet to the people of Israel. Will they choose the leaders of Israel or will they choose Jesus?

This was the most dramatic moment of Messianic Presentation of Jesus' ministry. He certainly had done it before, but this was by far the most dramatic.

My friends you must understand what this portion of the drama is claiming (that Jesus is the long-awaited King) and where this drama is leading (That he would be on the cross in just a handful of days).

Why? Because the Jews, on masse, would ultimately refuse to choose Him as their Messiah.

But, what about you?

This story is not make-believe. This is legitimate, recorded, true, history...

Jesus was, in fact, their long-awaited Messiah - He checked all the boxes.

And He did hang on a cross. Why? Because he wanted to - Monday and Tuesday of the passion week prove this out!

He did everything He could to get Himself on that cross by Friday to be the Paschal lamb that would take away the sin of the World.

Your sin. Someone must pay for your sin – either you for eternity in Hell or Jesus Christ, the wrath-absorbing sacrificial Lamb of God!

Won't you give your life to God today by repenting of your sin and placing your faith in the King of Kings - the Messiah – Jesus Christ? There is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved!

**1 John 1:9 ESV**

*<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

**Matthew 21:10 ESV**

*<sup>10</sup> And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?"*

**Who is this?** It is Jesus – The KING! The all-powerful, sinless, death crushing KING.

Will you be saved by Him today?