

Jesus in Jerusalem

Summary and Goal

Matthew 21 contains three scenes that occurred on the day Jesus entered Jerusalem during the week prior to His crucifixion. Jesus' entry into the city was welcomed with great fanfare, even though He approached in humility while sitting on a donkey. He cleansed the temple of those there to take advantage of the worshipers. And as the true Son of David, He permitted and welcomed the praise of children. In these events, Jesus fulfilled Old Testament expectations and longings for the Messiah, who would redeem His people, restore true worship, and receive all praise.

Main Passage

Matthew 21:1-17

Session Outline

1. Jesus is the Savior who comes to redeem His people (Matt. 21:1-11).
2. Jesus is the Savior who comes to restore true worship (Matt. 21:12-13).
3. Jesus is the Savior who comes to receive all praise (Matt. 21:14-17).

Theological Theme

Jesus is the Messiah who cleanses the temple and welcomes the unworthy into God's presence.

Christ Connection

By entering Jerusalem on a donkey, Jesus fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy about the coming Messiah. Through His actions in the temple, Jesus conveyed His judgment toward those who would misuse God's house for exclusionary and greedy purposes. For the sins of His people, Jesus offered His own body as a temple to be destroyed and then raised again.

Missional Application

God calls us to put away hypocritical and hollow worship and to exalt Jesus as Savior of the world.

Session Plan

Jesus in Jerusalem

Session 2

? For Further Discussion

Do you have any favorite “Easter eggs” from books, movies, or TV shows? If so, what are they?

What makes them feel special or rewarding to find them?

? For Further Discussion

Does Jesus’ cleansing of the temple imply that it is wrong for churches to have bookstores and so forth? Why or why not?

Pack Item 2: Jesus’ Passion Week Map

Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem and the location of the temple are noted on the map.

Introduction

Tell how the phrase “Easter egg” has entered into our cultural vocabulary. Cite some of the passages that set us up to search for Easter eggs throughout Scripture (leader p. 22; personal study guide [PSG] p. 19).

- ? Based on your previous study of the Bible, what are some ways Jesus fulfills Old Testament Scripture?
- ? How does fulfillment within Scripture help to strengthen your trust in God’s Word?

Summarize the session. State that in walking through Matthew 21, we see how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament expectations and longings for the Messiah (leader p. 23; PSG p. 20).

1. Jesus is the Savior who comes to redeem His people (Matt. 21:1-11).

Read Matthew 21:1-11. Talk about the mood of the crowd as Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem. Point out how this event fulfills Zechariah 9:9-10 (leader pp. 23-25; PSG pp. 20-21). *This connection is noted on Pack Item 4: Hearing the Old Testament in the New.*

- ? How should Matthew’s emphasis on Old Testament fulfillment shape the way we read and understand the Old Testament?
- ? How has studying the Old Testament helped you appreciate the first coming of Christ more fully?

Contrast how Jesus came on a young donkey, victorious yet humble with how conquering kings would enter their capitals (leader p. 25; PSG p. 22).

- ? Why do you think God chose to have His Son enter Jerusalem in a picture of humility?

Explain the biblical meaning of “Hosanna” and why the people were celebrating. Then discuss why labeling this passage “the triumphal entry” is perhaps a misnomer (leader p. 26; PSG pp. 22-23).

- ❓ What comes to mind when you hear the word *redemption*?
- ❓ Why is it significant that we recognize the purpose for which Jesus came?

2. Jesus is the Savior who comes to restore true worship (Matt. 21:12-13).

Read Matthew 21:12-13. Emphasize how this demonstration of Jesus is unlike that of cultural caricatures. Jesus is clearly acting from some combination of anger and frustration. He is not frustrated by selfish desires but rather by the sights and sounds of His Father’s will undone (leader pp. 26-27; PSG pp. 23-24).

- ❓ When have you been compelled to action by a desire for the glory of God, and why were you so compelled?

3. Jesus is the Savior who comes to receive all praise (Matt. 21:14-17).

Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 21:14-17. Explain that the time had finally come when Jesus no longer quieted the crowd—He received and relished the moment because the praise was right and so was the time. Mention how others—the chief priests and scribes—looked upon the crowd’s celebration with disgust and disdain. And they would have been right to, except that Jesus alone is worthy of worship (leader pp. 28-29; PSG pp. 25-26).

- ❓ Why do you think Jesus was willing to receive praise in this moment when before He had remained resistant?
- ❓ What might a life more abandoned to praise and worship of Jesus look like for you?

Conclusion

Close by announcing that the good news of “hosanna” is that Christ has come to save us. In our inadequate worship, we join the people in this narrative by crying out in faith the words of Psalm 118—“Save us!”—and He does (leader p. 29; PSG p. 26). *Apply the truths of this session with “His Mission, Your Mission”* (PSG p. 27).

Point 2 Option

Ask groups of 3-4 to read the “Essential Christian Doctrine” *Temple of the Holy Spirit* (leader p. 27; PSG p. 24) and to discuss the following questions (consider writing the questions on a board or sheet of paper for groups to have; also available on the DVD in *The Gospel Project for Adults: Leader Pack*):

- How does the biblical theme of God’s presence residing in sacred space deepen our understanding of Jesus’ anger in cleansing the temple?
- Why should seeing ourselves as the temple of God’s presence on earth bring sobriety and purpose to our lives, especially pertaining to worship?

Christ Connection: By entering Jerusalem on a donkey, Jesus fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy about the coming Messiah. Through His actions in the temple, Jesus conveyed His judgment toward those who would misuse God’s house for exclusionary and greedy purposes. For the sins of His people, Jesus offered His own body as a temple to be destroyed and then raised again.

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Missional Application: God calls us to put away hypocritical and hollow worship and to exalt Jesus as Savior of the world.

Expanded Session Content

Jesus in Jerusalem

Session 2

Voices from the Church

“‘Hosanna’ is an old Hebrew word that means ‘Save us, now!’, which the Jews employed while they waved their palm branches and welcomed the Messiah into Jerusalem for the last time. Only in God’s Kingdom is a cry for help equal to a shout of praise.”¹

—Andrew Peterson

Introduction

Over the past decade or so, the phrase “Easter egg” has entered into our cultural vocabulary as a way of referring to things intentionally hidden in books and movies as an inside joke or bonus for die-hard fans. If you go to Disney World, books are devoted to finding “Hidden Mickeys.” Entire websites are devoted to hidden Easter eggs of trivia in your favorite clever television show.

I think of this phenomenon when I think of the way Scripture unfolds. I’ve been studying the Bible for years and yet still find Easter eggs—golden trinkets containing treasures untold, intentionally hidden by a good Father for our delight as we see how Jesus fulfills Old Testament hopes, longings, and expectations. And the New Testament sets us up for this search:

- When Jesus spoke with the disciples on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection (the subject of a later session), the Bible says: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27; cf. 24:44-47).
- When Jesus spoke with the Pharisees in John 5, He said, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me” (v. 39). He also said, “For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me” (v. 46).

On and on we could go in seeing how Christ Himself and His apostles saw all of Scripture pointing toward King Jesus (see also 2 Cor. 1:20; Rom. 1:1-4; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:14-15).

-  Based on your previous study of the Bible, what are some ways Jesus fulfills Old Testament Scripture?
-  How does fulfillment within Scripture help to strengthen your trust in God’s Word?

Session Summary

In this session, we will walk through three scenes in Matthew 21 that occurred on the day Jesus entered Jerusalem during the week prior to His crucifixion. Jesus' entry into the city was welcomed with great fanfare, even though He approached in humility while sitting on a donkey. He cleansed the temple of those there to take advantage of the worshipers. And as the true Son of David, He permitted and welcomed the praise of children. In these events, Jesus fulfilled Old Testament expectations and longings for the Messiah, who would redeem His people, restore true worship, and receive all praise.

1. Jesus is the Savior who comes to redeem His people (Matt. 21:1-11).

¹ *Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once."*⁴ *This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,*

⁵ *"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"*

⁶ *The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. ⁸ Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"¹⁰ And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?"¹¹ And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."*

As Jesus was about to enter the holy city of Jerusalem, the crowd sensed the significance of the moment: "The anointed King is coming. The long-awaited Messiah is finally here." Ages of angst and hope and longing were coming to their consummation before their very eyes. The fringes of Jerusalem were in an uproar of hopeful expectation and praise. In recognition of the gravity of the occasion, the crowds removed their robes and laid them and palm branches before the feet of the King riding on a donkey.

Further Commentary

"The crowds that led the way and those that followed behind were calling out... 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' *Hosanna* translates the Hebrew expression meaning 'Save us' (Ps. 118:25), but by New Testament times it was simply a shout of joyous praise. 'He who comes in the name of the Lord' may have been a messianic title. To come 'in the name of the Lord' means to come as his emissary. 'Hosanna in the highest' means something like, 'Let even the angels in the heights of heaven sing praises.'"²

—Robert C. Mounce

Further Commentary

It is prophetically significant that Jesus and the disciples are approaching from the east in light of the prophecies of Ezekiel. Beginning in Ezekiel 10, the glory of the Lord departs from the temple and goes out over the mountains to the east as a symbol of Israel's unfaithfulness. But then in chapter 43, there is a vision of the glory once again returning from the east.

And here is Jesus coming from the east into the city of Jerusalem. And what does He immediately do? He immediately enters the temple. This seems to be the culmination of hundreds of years of waiting and longing. Now is the time when the glory of the Lord will return to the temple and restore the kingdom. But just as quickly as Jesus enters the temple, He departs. The full fulfillment of God's glory returning to the temple has not yet come, but its fulfillment is in Christ, the glory of the Lord (2 Cor. 4:5-6).

The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) all present the ministry of Jesus as building in a crescendo of anticipation. The narrative speeds along until Jesus and His disciples are on the edge of the city, at which time the pace begins to slow for the events of Holy Week leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. Here we find ourselves just days before Jesus' death as we pick up the action with the final leg of His advance toward the city.

The story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is found in all four Gospels, and yet, only Matthew mentions that there were two animals actually involved. Jesus rode a young donkey, and its mother was probably taken along in order to keep it calm as they walked through the chanting crowd. Why might he have included the reference to two animals and not just one like the other Gospel writers? I am not sure, but perhaps Matthew saw a potential correlation with Genesis 49:10-11:

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes.

So here we have an Old Testament reference to a donkey and a colt. Furthermore, Genesis speaks of these two animals being tied up or bound, which is another little detail that Matthew alludes to, as Jesus said to untie them.

And what is this passage in Genesis referencing? Are we just pulling random passages that have any sort of superficial similarity? Hardly. Genesis 49 is the account of Israel blessing his sons. Verses 10-11 are directed to one son in particular—Judah, the one through whom the messianic promise would be fulfilled.

In Matthew 21:4, Matthew provides the ninth of ten formula quotations found scattered through his Gospel regarding the fulfillment of Old Testament types and prophecies. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Matthew saw this event of Jesus on a donkey as a fulfillment of prophecy from Zechariah:

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. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. (Zech. 9:9-10)

Zechariah prophesied of the day when Jerusalem’s Messiah-King would come riding on a donkey. And what would be the result? He would usher in a reign of peace. Jerusalem, the city of peace—as its name means—would be the center of peace, shalom, wholeness, and security rippling out to the ends of the earth.

- 1. How should Matthew’s emphasis on Old Testament fulfillment shape the way we read and understand the Old Testament?
- 2. How has studying the Old Testament helped you appreciate the first coming of Christ more fully?

So picture the scene. Thousands of pilgrims were making their way into Jerusalem for the annual Passover festival, and then they began removing their cloaks and laying them and palm branches upon the road. This was five-star treatment for the entrance of a king into a city. But then came Jesus riding on a donkey. Typically conquering kings would enter their capitals on warhorses or in glorious chariots or leading a march of pomp and privilege. But Jesus came on a young donkey, victorious yet humble.

This is significant and atypical, but it was certainly not unheard of. In fact, it was not the first time that a Jewish king had ridden into Jerusalem on a mule. Solomon, the son of David, rode on a donkey to be anointed as king over Israel and rode into Jerusalem to sit on the throne (1 Kings 1:32-35). Here the greater Son of David rides into the city, and the drumbeat of messianic expectation is almost deafening.

The crowd was giving Jesus the royal treatment, but they called Him a prophet (Matt. 21:11). Perhaps there was significance to their use of the definite article “the” in front of “prophet.” First-century Jewish expectation held that there would be a prophet like Moses according to Deuteronomy 18:18-19. Not only did they say that He was a prophet, but they recognized that He was from Galilee (Matt. 21:11). Though this region was generally despised for its strong Gentile influence, it held prophetic significance (see Isa. 9:1-2). Regardless of their intent, Jesus is not just a prophet but the fulfillment of the Prophet from the Old Testament.

- 3. Why do you think God chose to have His Son enter Jerusalem in a picture of humility?

Further Commentary

The branches noted in Matthew 21:8 are palm branches according to John’s Gospel (12:13). And palms were symbolic of victory in intertestamental literature. In addition to the branches, the crowds begin to lay their cloaks before Him. This reminds of another Old Testament precedent from 2 Kings 9:13, when Israelites laid their garments under Jehu’s feet when he was proclaimed king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Voices from the Church

“Only the redeeming, all-powerful, transforming grace of God can raise our sin-besotted heart from the dead, give us eternal life, and set our gaze on Jesus, our blessed hope.”³

—Gloria Furman



Voices from Church History

“Let his coming in the name of the Lord be mentioned with strong affections, to our comfort, and joyful acclamations, to his glory. Well may we say, Blessed is he; for it is in him that we are blessed. Well may we follow him with our blessings, who meets us with his.”⁴

—Matthew Henry (1662-1714)



Voices from Church History

“Jesus did these things in their presence not to display pomp but as I have said, to fulfill prophecy, teach self-denial and to comfort his disciples, who were grieving for his death. He was showing them that he would suffer all these things willingly. Mark well the accuracy of the prophets, how they foretold all these things, some from David’s psalms, some from Zechariah. They had proclaimed them beforehand.”⁵

—John Chrysostom (circa 347-407)

What were the people crying out? “Hosanna,” or “Save us.” In this the people were echoing the words of Psalm 118:25-26: “Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD.”

Why were they celebrating? Messianic expectations in the first century were diverse, but most viewed the Christ as one who would purify the Jewish faith, punish the unrighteous, and judge Israel’s enemies. They had waited hundreds of years for a day like this. The people celebrated because they thought the drought was done, the famine was finished. The King was finally coming.

And of course, they were correct. Jesus will purify the faith, punish the unrighteous, and judge His enemies. But that was not why He was coming on this occasion. One day He will ride a warhorse as the conquering King of kings, but on this day He was riding a donkey as the Suffering Servant.

In this celebration, which Jesus fully accepts, there is the seedbed for escalation of tension. Unlike in previous chapters, He is no longer attempting to avoid the confrontation. Instead, He is walking headfirst into it with determined resolution.

We call this small section of Scripture “the triumphal entry,” but that is perhaps a misnomer. This is not the coming of a conquering king (at least not yet) but of a suffering servant. His true triumph is not marked by a late-afternoon entry from a mount but a mid-afternoon public execution on a cross followed by an early-morning exit from a tomb.

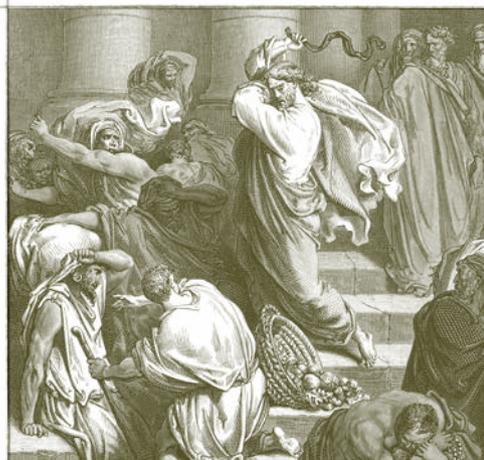


What comes to mind when you hear the word *redemption*?



Why is it significant that we recognize the purpose for which Jesus came?

2. Jesus is the Savior who comes to restore true worship (Matt. 21:12-13).



¹² *And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.* ¹³ *He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”*

The Jesus of culture is a caricature—Caucasian with flowing feathered hair and perhaps even blue eyes. He kneels beside a group of children, carries a sheep, or hugs a stranger. He is always happy and smiling. The idea of Jesus getting mad or sad is foreign and blasphemous to the good news of this vision or version of a “happy hippie” Jesus.

Unlike these cultural caricatures, Scripture presents a Jesus of passion and humanity. He experiences the gamut of human emotions because He is fully human:

Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (Heb. 2:17-18)

Jesus experienced compassion and pity (Mark 8:2). He marveled at people (Matt. 8:10). He experienced sorrow (Matt. 26:38) and sadness (John 11:33-35; cf. Heb. 5:7).

Although the Scripture doesn't reveal exactly the emotional motivations for Jesus' actions in the temple, it is clear that He is acting from some combination of anger and frustration. Unlike our frustration with traffic or bills or our favorite sports team, Christ's frustration arises from a place of holy discontentment. He is not frustrated by selfish desires but rather by the sights and sounds of His Father's will undone.

According to Jesus, the Father seeks true worship from true worshipers (John 4:23-24). Jesus was looking for those who sought His Father's face in the temple, but as He entered, He saw a façade instead. Rather than a place of gathering for the nations to pray, it was a spectacle of commerce with shimmering coins and cooing doves. Far from shining with the glory of God, the temple glimmered with the gilded glory of man.

In driving out the commercial interests in the temple, Jesus was not offering a critique of fair trade or making a statement on economic policy but instead declaring that this was neither the time nor the place. In effect, He turned the temple upside down as a sign of cleansing as one might pull out all the clothes from a drawer in order to rearrange the dresser.



When have you been compelled to action by a desire for the glory of God, and why were you so compelled?

Further Commentary

“They went out to ‘steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely and make offerings to Baal,’ only to return to the temple (‘my house, which is called by my name’) as to a place of safety; they had made it like the ‘robbers’ cave’ to which villains resort after their criminal forays. Jesus’ use of the phrase does not necessarily accuse the Jews of his day of the same crimes as Jeremiah’s contemporaries (including robbery), but highlights their lack of respect for God’s house by comparing it with that earlier flagrant abuse of the sanctuary. Those who heard might have reflected that Jeremiah’s sermon went on to predict the destruction of the temple ([Jer.] 7:12-15), and that that prediction was fulfilled soon after; Jesus will soon be making the same prediction ([Mark] 13:2).”⁶

—R. T. France

99 Essential Christian Doctrines

80. Temple of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit indwells the church, both individually and corporately (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 12:13). As the temple of the Holy Spirit, we live our lives differently than before, bearing the virtuous fruit that comes only by the indwelling work of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). This indwelling work of the Spirit also equips individual members of the church with gifts for the work of the ministry (1 Cor. 12:11).

Further Commentary

“Verse 14 describes an appropriate ministry for God’s house, in striking contrast to the commercial system Christ has just condemned. Matthew could easily have quoted Hosea 6:6 again; Jesus illustrates the priority of mercy over sacrifice. He also rejects the laws that seem to have prevented such ritually impure people from being in the temple...Children prove surprisingly good models as over against the religious leaders who should have understood but remain indignant. Their question for Jesus implies that he should rebuke the children for echoing the crowd’s earlier words of praise to him (v. 9), a kind of acclamation the leaders find inappropriate...There the children are praising Yahweh, so Jesus again accepts worship that is reserved for God alone. Truly, one greater than the temple is here (12:6).”⁷

—Craig L. Blomberg

3. Jesus is the Savior who comes to receive all praise (Matt. 21:14-17).

¹⁴ And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant, ¹⁶ and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read,

“Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise?”

¹⁷ And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

Though we live as though the world revolves around us, there are actually very few days for most of us in which we have honest elevated expectations of our will being done completely. Perhaps on your wedding day or birthday, you have a greater sense of anticipation of getting your way, but the rest of the time, most of us realize that our kingdom is not ultimate.

For most of Jesus’ life, He had remained hidden. Living in the rural backwoods of Galilee and working as a common carpenter certainly didn’t arouse suspicions that history and time itself would bend around Him. Even in His ministry to the multitudes, He tended to command caution and discretion as if His mission should be veiled in secrecy (see in particular what is called the “messianic secret” in Mark; cf. Mark 1:34,43-45; 3:12; 7:24,36; 8:30; 9:9).

But finally the time had come when Jesus no longer quieted the crowd. He was praised, and rather than rebuking the rejoicing crowd, Jesus received and relished the moment because the praise was right and so was the time.

The tradesmen and animals having been driven out of the temple, many of the hurt, lost, and broken began to flow in. The blind, lame, and children came to see and hear and touch Jesus, and He healed all who came. The temple was in an uproar as the children cried out.

Meanwhile, other eyes and ears were watching and listening, eyes and ears observing with disdain all that was happening as their glory and authority crumbled around the feet of Jesus. The voices of the chief priests and scribes joined with the chorus of the children, but with a decidedly different tune.



Disgust dripped from their mouths as they took up their critique of this spectacle—would this man really receive praise and honor and glory in the midst of this temple built for the Lord’s glory alone? This is a great and appropriate question. Had Jesus been anyone else, we would celebrate the priests for their courage and discernment. But Jesus is not an imposter or pretender. Unlike the façade of worship typical of the temple, Jesus is Himself the very face of faithfulness. He is the King who has come to redeem His people, restore true worship, and receive all praise. He alone is worthy of the worship.

- ❓ Why do you think Jesus was willing to receive praise in this moment when before He had remained resistant?
- ❓ What might a life more abandoned to praise and worship of Jesus look like for you?

Conclusion

In Romans 12, the apostle Paul urges Christians to offer themselves as living sacrifices. In other words, we are to worship God with all of our being. In this sense, worship is not something we do for one hour a week when the church is gathered; worship includes how we live our lives scattered in the community throughout the week. Living our lives as worshipers means that we live a life that revolves around bringing glory to God. As was said earlier, however, we often live as though the world revolves around us.

The good news of “hosanna” is that Christ has come to save us. In our inadequate worship, we join the people in this narrative by crying out in faith the words of Psalm 118—“Save us!”—and He does. It is only through Christ that we are forgiven for our misplaced worship, in all its various forms. And through Him, we are able to worship as those who were previously unworthy to stand in God’s presence. In Christ, we are welcomed into the presence of God. So let us put away hypocritical and hollow worship and choose instead to exalt Jesus above ourselves.

CHRIST CONNECTION: By entering Jerusalem on a donkey, Jesus fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy about the coming Messiah. Through His actions in the temple, Jesus conveyed His judgment toward those who would misuse God’s house for exclusionary and greedy purposes. For the sins of His people, Jesus offered His own body as a temple to be destroyed and then raised again.

Voices from Church History

“Jesus! It is the name which moves the harps of heaven to melody. Jesus! The life of all our joys. If there be one name more charming, more precious than another, it is this name. It is woven into the very warp and woof of our psalmody. Many of our hymns begin with it, and scarcely any, that are good for anything, end without it. It is the sum total of all delights. It is the music with which the bells of heaven ring; a song in a word; an ocean for comprehension, although a drop for brevity; a matchless oratorio in two syllables; a gathering up of the hallelujahs of eternity in five letters.”⁸

—Charles H. Spurgeon
(1834-1892)

Additional Resources

Jesus in Jerusalem

References

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4. Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* [WORDsearch].
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8. Charles H. Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1866), 39.
9. Jeremy Maxfield, "Getting Everyone Involved: The Difference Between Presence and Participation," LifeWay Groups Ministry [online], 21 July 2015 [cited 18 January 2017]. Available from the Internet: www.lifeway.com.



Get expert insights on weekly studies through Ministry Grid at MinistryGrid.com/web/TheGospelProject.
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Study Material

- "Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem"—Episode 10, Act 1 from *Telling God's Story* by Preben Vang and Terry G. Carter
- "A New and Improved David"—Blog post by Michael M. Dewalt; find a link to this blog post at GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources
- Previous *Biblical Illustrator* articles, including "It Happened on the Mount of Olives," can be purchased, along with other articles for this quarter, at LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator. Look for Bundles: The Gospel Project.

Sermon Podcast

Paul Jimenez: "Jesus Ignites the Worship Wars"

Find a link to this at GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources

Tip of the Week

Presence and Participation

Presence in a group is a matter of invitation, and this is a big deal because it exposes new individuals to the power of the gospel and the joy of community. But this is only the first step, as discipleship is more than just exposure but also requires engagement, or participation.

Participation is a matter of integration, getting people involved in our groups at a more meaningful level. This means people don't just come but also contribute to the group experience. How can leaders help group members participate rather than simply be present? Here are some ideas:

- **Greet each person**—Welcome people as they arrive and ask questions about their week. This strengthens relationships and engages people immediately.
- **Ask discussion questions**—Invite people to share their observations or experiences, and make sure to affirm people for sharing.
- **Pay attention**—Be mindful of people who are either consistently quiet or unusually quiet. Look for ways to encourage participation without forcing it, and check on the person in private so they feel noticed and loved.⁹

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Unit 1:



Matt Chandler is the Lead Pastor of Teaching at The Village Church in Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, and the president of the Acts 29 church-planting network. He has authored several books, including *Mingling of Souls*, *Recovering Redemption*, *Creature of the Word*, and *The Explicit Gospel*. Matt is married to Lauren, and they have three children, Audrey, Reid, and Norah.



Geoff Ashley serves as pastor at The Parkway Church in McKinney, Texas, after having served for ten years of ministry at The Village Church. He received a ThM from Dallas Theological Seminary and is married to Kaci. Together they have a beautiful daughter named Larken.

Unit 2:



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