

2.3

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

FOCUS VERSES

Matthew 21:4-5,
NKJV

⁴ All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:
⁵ "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

LESSON TEXT

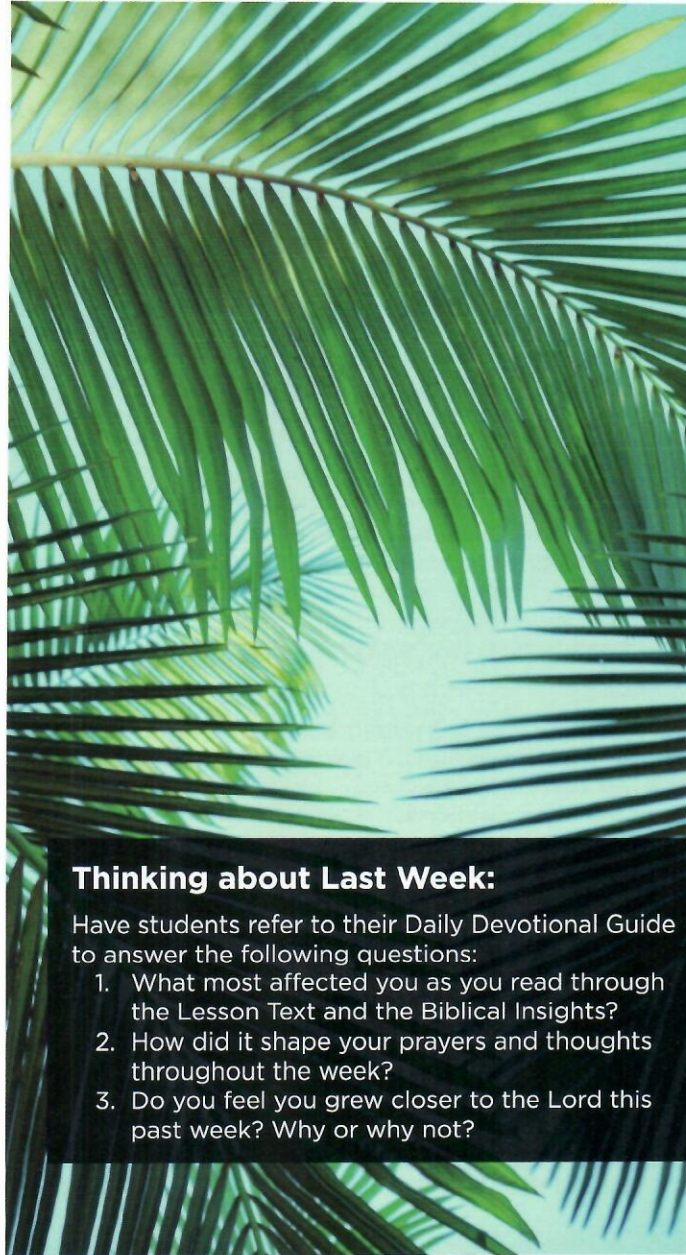
Matthew 21:1-11

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of being the meek Messiah.

TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

I will praise Jesus with what I have.



Thinking about Last Week:

Have students refer to their Daily Devotional Guide to answer the following questions:

1. What most affected you as you read through the Lesson Text and the Biblical Insights?
2. How did it shape your prayers and thoughts throughout the week?
3. Do you feel you grew closer to the Lord this past week? Why or why not?

SG TEACHING OUTLINE

Icebreaker: If you could farm any animals, what would they be?

Lesson Connection: Share the Lesson Connection.

- I. THE OLD TESTAMENT FULFILLED
 - A. Zechariah and Matthew
 - B. Zechariah and Genesis
 - » *What are other biblical examples of intertextuality?*
 - C. I Will Believe God's Word
- II. THE MEEK MESSIAH **I**
 - A. The Unbroken Colt and Makeshift Saddle
 - B. Coats and Palm Branches
 - » *What does it feel like to arrive at a reception or party without a gift?*
 - C. I Will Praise God with What I Have **V**
 - » *What do you have to worship God with? Are you worshipping Him with what you have?*
- III. THE PARADE
 - A. Hosanna to the Son of David
 - » *What is your favorite word or phrase to use in worship?*
 - B. The Religious Response
 - C. I Will Have a Relationship with Jesus for Myself

Internalizing the Message

- » *With whom do you most identify in the Bible?*

Prayer Focus

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- That we will understand how the Scriptures speak of Jesus
- To express our thanks to God for the salvation He provides in Jesus, the Son of David

LESSON CONNECTION

This is it. This is the last week of Jesus' life. In just over one hundred hours, Jesus will stand trial for crimes He did not commit and be sentenced to a public crucifixion He does not deserve. He knew it, but His dream team had no clue. They were busy selling "Jesus for Messiah" T-shirts. When they arrived in Bethphage, two miles from Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of His twelve disciples into town with a strange shopping list: "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me" (Matthew 21:2, NKJV).

The two disciples probably shrugged and headed into town. Sure enough, just like Jesus said, they found a donkey and its colt hitched to a post. As they were loosing them, the owner came out. "Can I help you fellas?"

These men of God had been caught hot-wiring the donkeys, but Jesus had given them an answer for when the owner asked the question: "The Lord hath need of them" (Matthew 21:3; Mark 11:6). I doubt the owners had ever heard that excuse. "The man we call Messiah wants to take these two for a spin."

The disciples led the donkey and colt back to Jesus. They threw their coats on these beasts of burden for saddles, and Jesus sat on the colt. Mind you, Jesus sat on a colt whose owner had yet to ride. It would be dangerous to jump on an unbroken colt and ride it around the parking lot, but it would be deadly to jump on an unbroken colt and ride it two miles into a cramped Jerusalem.

No one knew what to think. Jesus was great at stopping funerals and unstopping deaf ears, but they had never seen Him tame an untamed donkey. They were surprised when that little colt stood there and allowed Jesus on its back. Jesus chose a baby donkey, not because the rental car company was out of full-sizes. He was fulfilling a five-hundred-year-old prophecy of Zechariah, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9, NKJV).

For the last three years, Jesus had worked wonders and preached to thousands outside of Jerusalem, but on this day, Jesus would introduce Himself to His people in His holy city. He was about to ride in a one-float parade into the holy, capital city into a crowd of nearly three million.

BIBLE LESSON

I. THE OLD TESTAMENT FULFILLED

The New Testament is the beautiful unveiling of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. As we seek to know Jesus more, we do well to look back to the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures. As we have learned, the New Testament is filled with quotations, allusions, and paraphrases of Old Testament texts. We find one such reference in Matthew 21, "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: 'Tell the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your King is come to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey"'" (Matthew 21:4-5, NKJV).

A. Zechariah and Matthew

Matthew was quoting from the prophet Zechariah from over five hundred years earlier. Zechariah wrote, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9, NKJV). This verse is an example of intertextuality, where a later writer in Scripture quoted from an earlier writer in an interpretive way. Here, Matthew crowned Jesus as the King whom Zechariah prophesied would come riding on a donkey. But Matthew was not the first to proclaim Christ as King. Jesus Himself claimed to fulfill this prophecy by sending His disciples to find the donkey and colt.

B. Zechariah and Genesis

Zechariah pulled from a prophecy Jacob had made in his last words to his twelve sons. Jacob gave less than rave reviews to Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. Then Jacob solemnly told Judah, "You are he whom your brothers shall praise; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's children shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people. Binding his donkey to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk" (Genesis 49:8-12, NKJV).

Genesis 49:11 and Zechariah 9:9 are the only two places in the Old Testament where we read of a foal and a colt together. Then Jesus called the disciples to bring the foal and the colt to Him, and they obeyed—another textbook example of intertextuality. The words are found first in Genesis, then found and further

clarified in Zechariah, and finally found again in Matthew, where they are specifically fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

What are other biblical examples of intertextuality?

C. I Will Believe God's Word

Jacob believed God's word. Zechariah believed God's word. Of course, Jesus believed God's word because He wrote it. The disciples believed God's word and found the foal and the colt. Every prophecy God has ever made has or will come to pass just as God declared it. Let us believe God's word. Perhaps He made you a promise in prayer, or He gave you infallible Scripture to hold onto as you face a battle for your faith. Certainly, He has spoken to you while the pastor has preached God's Word. However you hear God's voice, believe Him. God always keeps His word.

II. THE MEEK MESSIAH

When the duo of disciples returned with the donkey and the colt, they were fulfilling Zechariah's messianic prophecy. Everyone watched, waited, and wondered if Jesus would be able to ride an unbroken colt. They were in Bethphage headed to Jerusalem. Could Jesus ride a colt for two miles that had never been ridden?

Teacher Option:

*A supplemental image is available in the Resource Kit. **I***

A. The Unbroken Colt and Makeshift Saddle

Before Jesus could saddle up, the disciples doffed their coats and cloaks and spread them on the back of the colt for a saddle. The one who sits on the throne in Heaven sat on some tattered clothes on a colt just outside Jerusalem. Even if He insisted on riding this unbroken beast, surely someone affluent could have paid for a proper saddle, but He sat on a makeshift saddle of His itinerant disciples' coats. Jesus was proving what He preached one chapter earlier: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

Perhaps His humility is one reason so many rejected Him as their Messiah. He was born among the animals, laid in a manger where the animals fed. Shepherds, who stepped where sheep stepped, were first to receive His birth announcement. He was brought up in the humble home of a blue-collar carpenter in the ordinary town of Nazareth. He recruited twelve ordinary men to follow Him. Jesus was not the portrait of a conquering king who had come to overthrow the overreaching Roman government. He was the portrait of a meek Messiah who had come to overthrow the tyrannical reign of sin and Satan. Yet somehow, the crowd understood that day to be monumental in their generation.

B. Coats and Palm Branches

People left home in a hurry when they heard Jesus was in town. They either did not have the time or the money to bring an appropriate gift to Him. They came only with the clothes on their backs, but when they saw Jesus, they knew they could not come

empty-handed. Some of them took off their coats and cloaks and spread them on the road. A few worshipers cut down palm branches and spread them on the road in front of Jesus.


We call that Sunday Palm Sunday because the crowd cut down palm branches and waved them or laid them down as worship. But we would do no injustice to the Scripture to call that Sunday "Coat Sunday," "Cloak Sunday," "Shawl Sunday," "Light Jacket Sunday," or simply "This Is What I Have Sunday" because the crowd worshiped Jesus with what they had. During the Intertestamental period, Israel reentered Jerusalem with praise and palm branches, but there is no Old Testament command to praise God with palm branches. The Jews outside Jerusalem on that day praised Jesus using what they had.

What does it feel like to arrive at a reception or party without a gift?

C. I Will Praise God with What I Have

We clap our hands on the fast songs and raise our hands on the slow ones because that's what we have. And we do have a biblical command to clap our hands (Psalm 47:1) and to lift our hands (Psalm 134:2). We sing unto the Lord because we are commanded to sing (Psalm 96:1-2) and because our song is what we have. Some people accidentally sing in three keys on one song, yet they sing because God has given them a song, and they sing it for the glory of God.

During the pandemic of 2020, churches throughout the world were shuttered and unable to hold services like they held prior to the pandemic. They could not play instruments they had paid thousands of dollars to play. Some pastors recorded services in their living room or family room around an upright piano without microphones, yet they worshiped God because that's what they had. And God was pleased with their worship. Let us give God what we have in worship. He is worthy of our best, but our best does not have to be professional or polished, only sincere and honest.

Teacher Option:
A supplemental video is available in the Resource Kit. 

What do you have to worship God with? Are you worshiping Him with what you have?

III. THE PARADE

A. Hosanna to the Son of David

It must have been a sight to see Jesus sitting high atop a colt riding into Jerusalem as people went ahead of Him, behind Him, and beside Him, spreading coats and palm branches. It must have been quite a sound to hear as the people cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Matthew 21:9). The word *hosanna* appears thrice in the Bible: Matthew 21, Mark 11, and John 12. All three occurrences tell the story of the triumphal entry.

Hosanna comes from a Hebrew word meaning "save now" or "save us, we pray." This Old Testament prayer was a prayer of salvation. However, by the time we come to the New Testament, this prayer turns to praise, and the people along Jesus' parade

route were praising Him for salvation. Perhaps they were praising Jesus for saving them from the Romans, from their sins, or both. Either way, they had witnessed enough wonders to know Jesus was sent from God, for no man could work the wonders Jesus worked unless God was with Him. (See John 3:2.)

Their designation of Jesus as the “Son of David” gives us deeper insight that they saw Jesus as the Messiah. They viewed Jesus as the one who would one day sit on the throne of David as a descendant of their royal hero, King David. Of course, Jesus’ genealogy found in Matthew 1 traces His lineage all the way back to King David, making Him eligible to be called a son of David. Further, the people’s praise stemmed from Psalm 118 where the children of Israel called out, “Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD” (Psalm 118:25–26).

What is your favorite word or phrase to use in worship?

B. The Religious Response

Once Jesus made His way into Jerusalem, it seemed everyone was happy. Jesus was happy. The disciples were happy. The people along the parade were happy. But the religious were unhappy. In fact, they were “sore displeased” when they saw everyone—especially the children—crying out “Hosanna to the Son of David” (Matthew 21:15). They could not conceive how a mere man such as Jesus of Nazareth could accept praise and worship like He did. If only they would have had a relationship with Him and understood He was not just a mere man.

C. I Will Have a Relationship with Jesus for Myself

As early as the end of this selfsame chapter, the religious rulers looked for ways to arrest Jesus without inciting a riot. It is interesting how such heartfelt praise and worship exacted such ire from religious rulers. We would do well to understand it is not enough just to be religious; we must have a close relationship with Jesus for ourselves. Today, let’s seek to be closer to Jesus than we were yesterday. And if Jesus does not come back before tomorrow, we ought to seek to be closer to Him tomorrow than we are today. The closer we get to Jesus, the more we will see Him for who He truly is: the Son of David, the Savior, the Messiah, the almighty God in human flesh.

INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

Charles Haddon Spurgeon read about a man who dreamed about religion while he was in great distress of mind. He thought he stood in the outer court of Heaven and saw a glorious host marching up the steps of light, singing hymns, and bearing the banners of victory. They passed by the dreamer and entered through the gates. He heard sweet strains of music in the distance.

"Who are they?" he asked someone standing near him.

The reply came back, "Don't you know? They are the goodly fellowship of the prophets, who have gone to be with God."

He heaved a deep sigh, as he said, "Alas! I am not one of them, and shall never be, and cannot enter there."

By and by there came another band, equally lovely in appearance and equally triumphant, all robed in white.

"Who are these?" he cried with wistful expectancy.

"They are the goodly fellowship of the apostles."

"Alas," he said, as they passed by him, "I belong not to that fellowship, and I cannot enter there."

He still waited and lingered, hoping he might yet go in, but the next multitude did not encourage him, for they were the noble army of martyrs. He could not go with them nor wave their palm branches. He waited and saw the next was a company of preachers of the gospel and faithful Christian workers, but he felt he could not go in with them.

Hope of ever entering Heaven seemed gone. But at long last, as he watched, he saw a larger host than all the rest put together marching and singing gloriously. In front of them walked the repentant woman who was a sinner and the repentant thief who died on the cross next to Jesus. He looked long and saw once-wretched sinners like Manasseh and the like; and when they entered, he could see who they were, and he thought, *There will be shouting about them.* To his astonishment it seemed as if all Heaven was rent with sevenfold shouts as they passed in. The angels said to him, "These are they that were mighty sinners, saved by mighty grace."

Then he sighed and said, "Blessed be God! I can go in with them." And he woke up.

With whom do you most identify in the Bible?

Prayer Focus

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- That we will understand how the Scriptures speak of Jesus
- To express our thanks to God for the salvation He provides in Jesus, the Son of David