

Who is this Man? (Psalm 118 & Matt 21:1-11) Palm Sunday 5-Apr-20¹

We'll be looking at the NT passage from **Matthew 21:1-11** and also referring to **Psalm 118**.

It's always good to have your Bibles open at the passages as we go through...

Let's **pray** and ask for **God's help** in understanding His Word.

Intro

- In **Jesus' day** - people didn't fully understand who Jesus was?
- Lots of **people, today**, don't fully understand who Jesus is either?
 - **Some** may say He **never existed** - it's just a **made-up story**
 - Or they might see Him as a **great historical figure**
 - Or that He was a **Jewish hero** who was **unfairly treated**
 - Or that He was a **great teacher** or a **great leader**
 - Or that He was some **sort of magician**
- As we look at our **passage** from the NT - **Matthew 21 - verses 1 to 11**
- It's a **pivotal moment** in the life of Jesus
- For **3 years** - **Jesus** has been with His **disciples**
- Throughout **Matthew's Gospel**
- Matthew has revealed that Jesus:
 - **Taught** many things about **God** and about **Himself**
 - He **performed miracle** after **miracle** - things like - **calming a storm**, **feeding 5000**, **walking on water**, **healing people** from various **sicknesses** and **disabilities** - and he even **brought someone back to life**
 - He told **parables** to **explain** how **God's Kingdom** worked

- Jesus **does things that only God** could do and He **teaches things that only God** could would know
- He's even **predicted 3 times** - that He would be **rejected** by the Jewish people, and that He must die by **crucifixion** and that He would **rise 3 days later**
- Jesus even **described Himself as God's Son** and used terms like "the *Son of Man*" to describe Himself
- One of His disciples, **Peter** - has **declared** (Matt 16:16) that Jesus is the **Messiah** (*God's chosen promised One - the One God would send to save His people*) - and that **Jesus is the Son of the Living God.**
- Despite His **teaching**, the **miracles** and the **parables** - even His **disciples** are not entirely **sure who Jesus is.**
- As for the **Jewish leaders** - they're very **insecure** with Jesus being on the scene. **Jesus is threatening their power and their status - with His **teaching** - with His **knowledge** - and His **claims** of being **sent by God** - and even His **outrageous claim** of being the **Son of God****
- As for the **Jewish people** - many are **very excited about Jesus** - He **heals** people - He **teaches** with **authority** - He **cares** about the **outcasts** of society - He's not **like the religious leaders** - **He's different.**
- And **some** of the **people** are **looking** for a **hero** to come along and **save** them from the **harsh oppression** of **Roman rule** - they want a **King** - like the **favourite King of Israel** from 1000 years earlier - **King David**

As we pick up the story in **Matt 21** - we're in **Jerusalem** it's the time of the annual **Passover Festival**

Jerusalem is packed - it's estimated there were 2 million people in Jerusalem at the time!

As **Jesus approaches Jerusalem** on that **first Palm Sunday** - He makes a statement of who He really is.

[PowerPoint]

Who is He?

So, who is He?

That's the **question** the people ask in **v10** of our reading from **Matthew 21**.

Well - let's explore **Matt 21** - to see who **Jesus** really is?

1. Jesus has power that only God has (vv1-3)

First, **Jesus** has **power** that only **God** has - vv1-3

As **Jesus approaches Jerusalem** - He tells His **disciples** to go and **fetch** a **donkey** with a **colt** (baby male foal). **Mark & Luke's** gospels both **tell** us the **colt** has never been **ridden before**. How does **Jesus** know where the **donkey** and **colt** will be?

Jesus even **prepares** for every **contingency** - if **anyone** asks the **disciples** about taking the **donkey** and the **colt** - then just say *the Lord needs them and they will send them right away*. You see **Jesus** knows **everything** like **God** does - because **Jesus** is **fully human** and **fully God**.

And He has the **power of God**

A **colt** that has **never been ridden** before - would be **lively** and **spooked** by the **big crowd**

But **Jesus is God** - controlling a frisky young colt is no trouble for Jesus.

Also, the **fact** that the **colt** has not been **ridden before** - means it's being used for a **sacred purpose** - just like in the **OT** - when the **ark of the covenant** was **moved** - it was on a **new cart** that had **never been used before** (2 Sam 6:3)

2. Jesus is a King - but a different type of King (vv4-8)

Second - Jesus is a King - but a different type of King - verses 4 to 8

As **Jesus rides** into town on that **donkey**

He **fulfils** a **prophecy** made by **Zechariah** in Zechariah **9:9**

The **prophet spoke** of a **time** when the **King of God's people** would ride into town on a **donkey**

Remember - **Israel** hasn't had their **own king** for **many years** - and the **Jews** are now under **Roman rule**

Jesus riding on a **donkey** is **significant**

A **donkey** is a **symbol** of being **humble** and a **symbol** of someone coming in **peace**

Jesus riding in - is not a **military statement** - **otherwise** He would ride in on a **stallion** and with a **sword**

No - **Jesus comes** in **peace**

His **peace** is not **military peace** - but **peace** between **God** and **humans**

You see the **relationship** between **God** and His **people** has **been** broken pretty much since **God** gave them **rules** to follow - the **people** have not **obeyed** **God's**

rules - from generation to generation - and the **relationship** has been **crying out** to be fixed

So, **Jesus comes** to **bring peace** between God and humans

And that **peace** is going to **come** - by **Jesus' death** in a **week's time** {we'll talk more about that on **Good Friday**}

Jesus comes as a King **fighting a war** - but not a war with the **Romans** - but a **war on sin!**

His **Sword** is His **Word** - **God's Word** - which will **penetrate** people's hearts and make them **realize** they need to **come back** to **God** and say **sorry** for their **sins** - and believe that **Jesus** is the only one who **can save** them from the **punishment they deserve** for their **sins** - which is death and separation from God forever.

Jesus is a **different King** - not a **military king** - but the **King of Peace** - a **King** who is **prepared to lay down His life** so His **subjects** are not punished

How do we **know** the **people think He** is a **King**?

See V8 - they **lay down** their **cloaks** and **palm branches** to welcome Him - **something** the **people did** when King **Jehu** became King (2 Kings 9:13 - and Judas Maccabeus 167BC)

3. Jesus is the Promised Messiah (v9) (Psalm 118)

Third - **Jesus** is the **Promised Messiah** - that's verse 9 and also Psalm 118.

Messiah means **God's Chosen/Anointed One**

The OT writers had spoken of **God's Chosen One** - the Messiah - coming to **save His people**

The **Messiah** was often referred to as *the Son of David*

The *Son of David* term comes from a prophecy made to King David (1000 years before Jesus) that there would be a forever King from David's family line - who would be in charge of a forever kingdom -

Jesus is from David's family line - and **Jesus** is the King of Heaven and Earth - and He's been around since creation (Col 1:15-20) - He is this promised forever King - of this forever Kingdom

So as King **Jesus** - rides into town

The people shout in v9

"Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Hosanna means "save us" or "grant us success"

What they're saying to **Jesus** is - "Save us, Messiah"

You see - when the people shout "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" - the people are literally shouting out verses 25 & 26 of Psalm 118 - our OT reading [Please turn there now]

Psalm 118 is a Hallel Psalm

Hallel means "Praise"

In fact - **Psalms 113-118** are all Hallel or Praise Psalms

Hallel - is where we get **Hallelujah** from - which means **praise the Lord**.

Later on, in **Matthew's Gospel** - when **Jesus** and His **disciples** have their last meal together - the **Last Supper** - in Matt 26:30 says they **sang a hymn together**.

The **hymn** that they **sang** after supper was **probably Psalm 118**, because that is the **traditional Psalm** sung at the conclusion of the **Passover Feast**.

This **Psalm** is a **prophetic psalm** about **Jesus**, which found its **fulfillment** in the week **beginning** on **Palm Sunday** leading up to **Good Friday**.

{The **Psalm** either **written** by King **David** as He **became King** - or **written** after the **Jews** were **released** from **captivity** in **Babylon**}

The Psalm is basically a **joyful psalm** about how **God** **rescues** His **people**

The Psalm **begins** by **thanking God** - for His **goodness** and **reminding** everyone **God's love endures forever** - see **verses 1 to 4**:

Let Israel say "God's love endures forever"

Let House of Aaron say "God's love endures forever"

Let those who fear the Lord say "God's love endures forever"

And we can say - despite the recent **bush fires, floods, droughts, storms** and **covid-19 virus** - "**God's love endures forever**"

The writer of the Psalm in v5 - goes on to say - "*I cried out to the Lord - and He brought me into a spacious place*"

And we too can cry out to the **Lord** - and He listens

And we can join the writer and say as in v6 - "*The Lord is with me - I will not be afraid - what can mere mortals do to me?*"

And we can join the writer and say as in v7 - "*The Lord is with me - He is my helper*"

Why can we say this?

Because the writer realizes there's a golden truth here - we all need to realize.

In V8 - It's ***better to trust God than humans*** - humans will at some stage **let us down** - they might not mean to or want to - but humans aren't perfect like God. Whereas - God will always be there - even when everyone else has deserted us.

What the writer realizes is

Even when he's surrounded by nations (v10,11) - or when his enemies are surrounding him like a swarm of bees (v12) - even when he was pushed back and ready to fall (v13) -

The writer of the Psalm realizes that the Lord is his strength and defense - and the Lord is his salvation - see v14 -

What the writer of the Psalm means is - no matter what problems we face in our lives - and we're all experiencing problems right now with this virus.

This virus has us separated from our families - grandparents can't see their grandchildren - school children can't see their school mates - workmates can't see they fellow workers - our church family can't hang out together - and sports and entertainment events cancelled - restaurants and cafes are closed - people have lost jobs or had their pay cut.

But despite all these problems -

The **writer** of the Psalm - **realizes** that **God is His** salvation

And there's **something even more serious** we **all need saving from** - **than these problems** in our lives right now.

We have an even **bigger problem** **we can't fix** - and that's our **sinful behaviour** - our **rebellion against God** - which **affects** our **relationship with Him**.

But there's an **answer** to **fix this broken relationship with God**
God Himself - **provides the Saviour**.

So, the writer - v15 - **can shout** in victory!

There is a Saviour - for those who believe in the Lord.

See v19-21

Open for me the gates of the righteous;

I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.

²⁰ *This is the gate of the LORD*

through which the righteous may enter.

²¹ *I will give you thanks, for **you answered me**;*

*you [God] have become **my salvation**.*

God **provides salvation** **from** the **enemy inside** each one of us - **that is our sin** and **rebellion against God**

His **salvation** is **by sending Jesus** to **fix this problem of sin**

And **restore** our **relationship with God**.

So as **Jesus rides** into town - it's like **He's saying** - **'I'm the guy - Zechariah was talking about** - **I'm the guy the Psalm writer was talking about** - **I'm the Promised Messiah** - **I've come to save My people**'.

And it's **no coincidence** - that **Jesus rides** into town at **Passover** - because **He's our Passover Lamb** - the Lamb of God - the willing sacrifice for sin.

But there's a **big But**

As Jesus **predicted** Himself **3 times**

And as the **Psalm predicts** in v22

Jesus is going to be **rejected**

The Psalm **describes Jesus** as a **cornerstone** -

In **building terms** - the **cornerstone** is the **first stone** laid when building - and the **stone from which** all **measuring** and **building** is taken from

But - the **Jewish people** (mostly) **will reject** this **cornerstone**

They **don't want to build** their lives **on Jesus** as the **foundation stone** of their lives.

They **think** they can do **without Him**.

And many people today think the same!

Unfortunately - that's the **wrong choice**

The Psalm says - v22 - this **stone** - **Jesus** - **that** the **builders** (the Jewish leaders and people) **reject** - is actually the **most important stone** of their lives

They **should be accepting** and **believing** in this **cornerstone** - **Jesus**

And **without Him** - they **can't have** **salvation** and **forgiveness** of their sins - and they **can't have** the **promise** of **eternal life** - in **Heaven**

You see - **what everyone is missing** on that **first Palm Sunday** is what the Psalm says in v23-25

The Lord is providing salvation for His people

This is the Day – it's going to happen – when God reveals the full identity of the Saviour – this is the day to be rejoicing and be glad!

This is the day to be crying out – Lord, save us – Lord grant us success - Hosanna to the Son of David

The **people** in Jerusalem - on that first Palm Sunday - were shouting out the **right words!**

Yes - **Jesus** is the **One** who **can** and will **save us** - but **He's** saving us for **eternity** - not for this time on Earth.

There's a **bigger picture**

Problems like bushfires, floods, droughts, storms and this virus are real **problems** - and **Jesus** can help us with them.

But - the **problem** that **matters most** - is us not being right with **God** - because that **affects** eternity - it **affects** where we will spend our time beyond death

Answer to the Question "Who is this?"

So, returning to the question - **Who is Jesus?**

Look at Matt 21 - verse 10 again - it says '*the whole city was stirred*' - it **literally** means quaking like an **earthquake** - the **atmosphere** is fever pitch

So, when the **people** ask in v10 of **Matt 21** - *Who is this?*

The **crowds** answered in v11 that - **Jesus** is the **prophet** from **Nazareth**

That's only part of the **answer**

Matt 21 and **Psalm 118** - as well as the whole **Bible** says

Jesus is fully God, Jesus is fully human, He is the Son of God in the Trinity, He is the Messiah, The Christ, Our Saviour, Lord of our lives - He is the perfect Prophet, Priest and King - in fact King of kings and Lord of lords.

Response

Who Jesus is - demands a response!

This is the Day to make sure that we believe the truth that Jesus spells out in John 14:6

*I am the way and the truth and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through me.***

Now one final thought...

The people looking on as Jesus came into town

They saw Jesus at a distance - most of them didn't know Jesus personally - *up close and personal* - so to speak

I wonder if we see Jesus at a distance - rather than *up close and personal?*

Our relationship with Jesus - has to be up close and personal - so that our lives on this Earth can be lived in a way that pleases God - and so that our lives on Earth can be lived to the full (John 10:10)

Mahatma Gandhi - despite being a Hindu said this:

I like your Christ. I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.

Could that be said about us - that we are so unlike Jesus our Saviour

The way to **remedy** that is - I'd like to **encourage us all**

- **Feed** daily on His **Word** - **meditate** on His **Word**
- Spend **time with Him** each **day** and throughout the **day**
- Know Jesus, Follow Jesus, Love Jesus
- He's our **God**, Our **King**, Our **Messiah** & **Saviour**

Let's pray

Benediction

Let me **leave you** with a **picture** of **Heaven** and a **spectacular day** like **Palm Sunday** - only better - it's a **perfect day** - from Rev 7:9-10

*⁹After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding **palm branches in their hands**. ¹⁰And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."*

AMEN