

2nd April 2023

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

¹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

² Let Israel say:
"His love endures forever."

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¹⁹ 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 have become my salvation.

²² The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

²³ the LORD has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes.

²⁴ The LORD has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad.

²⁵ LORD, save us!
LORD, grant us success!

²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.
From the house of the LORD we bless you.

²⁷ The LORD is God,
and he has made his light shine on us.

With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession
up to the horns of the altar.

²⁸ You are my God, and I will praise you;
you are my God, and I will exalt you.

²⁹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Matthew 21:1-11

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."

⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

⁵ "Say to Daughter Zion,
'See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!"

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

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

¹¹ The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Hosanna, the Son of David (Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 & Matthew 21:1-11)

G'Day Church Family

Please have your Bibles in front of you – opened at Matthew 21:1-11

There's the usual **outline** for you to **take notes** – if that helps you **concentrate**.

Let me ask **God** for His **help** and **guidance** first – let's **pray**...

Context/Intro (Matthew 21:10)

Just **before** we look at this **passage** from Matthew 21

Let's just get the **context**

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**
- Jesus told **parables** to explain how **God's Kingdom** worked
- Jesus **does things that** only **God can** do and He **teaches things that** only **God would** know
- He's even **predicted 3 times** – that He would be rejected by the Jewish people, and that **He will be killed** 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**
- In recent days, **Jesus has even raised His friend Lazarus from the dead** – just down the road from Jerusalem – at a place called **Bethany**

So far, He’s **resisted revealing publicly to everyone who He really is**

But now He is about to leave everyone in no doubt **as to who He is** – as He sets His face towards Jerusalem

The **atmosphere is fever-pitched** – on the back of this miracle with Lazarus and the fact that it’s the Jewish Festival of Passover – **Jerusalem is packed to the rafters** – it’s the Easter Show on steroids – will **Jesus make His move?** Will he **take on the Romans** and the **religious leaders** – what **will He do?**

(pause)

There's just one problem - **people in Jesus' time** didn't **fully understand who Jesus is/was**

In Matthew 21 verse 10 – the people ask “*Who is this?*” about Jesus

So, as we look at the preceding verses of Matthew 21 – we get to understand who Jesus really is...

Who is this? (Matthew 21:1-9)

[Slide 1-Heading]

Jesus has the power of God (Matthew 21:1-3)

As we pick up the story in verses 1 to 3

[Slide 1A-Power of God]

First - we see that ***Jesus has the power of God***

See v1 & 2 – **Jesus sends** two of his **disciples** to a village ahead of them – where they will **find a donkey and a colt** beside her and they are to **bring them both to him**. Then v3 – if anyone asks why – they are to simply say “*The Lord needs them*”

How does Jesus know the donkey and colt are there?

How does Jesus know the owner of the donkey and colt will let the disciples have the animals?

We can only conclude that **Jesus is omniscient** – He **knows everything** – and He knows that **He only has to say the word** – and the **owners will release the donkey and the colt**.

From Mark's version of the story – we know that **Jesus rode the colt which no-one had ever ridden**. Such a colt would be stubborn and frisky and **easily spooked by a noisy crowd**– yet that's no trouble for Jesus – because Jesus is **omnipotent – all powerful!**

From Luke's version of the story – we learn that as Jesus approached Jerusalem, he **wept over the city** and he **said** in Luke 19:42-44 *“If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.”*

At that moment – **Jesus** got a **glimpse** of the **city of Jerusalem** – **in 40 years' time** – in **70AD** – when the **city was completely destroyed** along with the **temple** - by the **Romans**.

Jesus wept because He **foreknew** the **people** of Jerusalem – although excited to see Him ride in as King on that first Palm Sunday – would turn around and **reject Him** less than a week later – and **Jesus foreknew** most of His **own people would not believe He was/is the Messiah?**

Jesus knows the beginning and the end – and everything in between.

Jesus has the power of God

(pause)

Jesus is a different kind of King (Matthew 21:4-8)

[Slide 1B-Different King]

Second – **Jesus is a different kind of King** – that's verses 4 to 8

As Jesus rides into Jerusalem – He **fulfils** a **prophecy** of the prophet **Zechariah** from **500 years earlier**

In Zechariah 9:9 – it says:

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Jesus IS that victorious King that Zechariah is talking about

But **Jesus rides** in on a **humble donkey** – not a **stallion** or **war horse**

It **has to be a donkey** – to **fulfil** the **prophecy!**

The **donkey** had never been ridden – which was often the custom – **when an animal was to be used for a special purpose** – like for use by a King – OR for a holy purpose – like for use by God!

Using a **donkey** was a **sign of humility** and a **sign of coming in peace** – and a **sign of royalty**

Jesus wasn't here to win a military victory over the **Romans**

He was here to **win a victory over sin** – and **bring peace between** **God and humankind** – by riding to His death – on a **cross** – less than a week later.

That's why the **prophet Isaiah** – can describe Jesus – as the **Prince of Peace** –

That's why **Jesus said** in John 14:27 - *my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.*

Jesus doesn't bring world peace – like some contestant of a beauty pageant asks for – **Jesus brings peace in our hearts and peace with God** – because His death - gives forgiveness of sins – for all who care to believe in Him

He's a different kind of **King** – who's **prepared to die for the citizens of His Kingdom.**

He's not a **warrior King** – like King **David** or **Alexander the Great** or **Napoleon.**

He's the **suffering servant King** – as we will see on Good Friday

The crowd at least understand that **Jesus is a King** – they spread their **cloaks** on the **road** – just like in days of old when the **people** of Jerusalem **welcomed King Jehu** in 2 Kings 9:13

People even grabbed palm leaves and **spread** them on the **road** as Jesus rides into the city!

What a glorious day it is!

Little do they know – He **comes to die** – not to be welcomed as a King!

(pause)

[Jesus is the Promised Messiah & Saviour \(Matthew 21:9 & Psalm 118:1-2,19-29\)](#)

[Slide 1C – Messiah & Saviour]

Third – *Jesus is the Promised Messiah and Saviour*

Look at verse 9 – the crowds shouted:

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

What the crowd shout is straight from our Old Testament reading from Psalm

118

Psalm 118 – is a psalm all about God’s chosen Messiah – Jesus - coming to save His people

[It’s quite likely that Psalm 118 was sung by Jesus and His disciples after the Last Supper (Matthew 26:30) as it was traditionally sung at Passover]

Psalm 118 – is one of the Hallel Psalms – which are **Psalms 113-118**

Hallel in **Hebrew** means “**praise**” – so when we use the word *Hallel-ujah* – it means “***praise the Lord***”

And look how they praise King Jesus

They say “*Hosanna to the Son of David*”

Hosanna literally means “*O save us now*” – but over the centuries – it had come to be used as an **expression of praise and joy**

And the term “*Son of David*” is a term that identified Jesus as the Promised descendant of David – who would be God’s chosen Messiah – who would come and save God’s people

So, what the people were saying as Jesus rode by is:

Jesus is the Messiah mentioned in Psalm 118 –

He’s the ONE who will save us – **He’s this descendant** – the **Son of David** – we’ve been waiting for.

Of course, the people are correct in identifying Jesus as the Messiah – and as a Saviour

They just have the wrong idea of what Jesus is saving them from

He's not saving them from the **oppressive Roman rule** – or from the **oppressive religious leaders** – He's coming to save them - from the punishment - we all have to face for our sins – namely death.

Jesus is going to take care of that on Good Friday and Easter Sunday

If we **pause for a moment** and look at our Old Testament reading – from **Psalm 118** – [[Please turn there now](#)]

Look at **v1 and V2** – we see why - God sends His Son Jesus – because God's love endures forever!

We can rely on God's love – it's consistent – it's everlasting – it doesn't fail like human love sometimes does!

Then if we skip down to v19-20 – we see that **Jesus is the gate** by which people **enter into a right relationship with God** – and become righteous – **right with God and approved by God**

Jesus Himself says in John 10:9 – *I am the **gate**; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.*

Then Psalm 118 verse 21 – the Psalmist says – the Lord – the Messiah described in the Psalm – **has become his salvation** – **Jesus is truly the saviour who saves people from their sins**

Then verse 22 – **Jesus** – the **Messiah** – is described as the cornerstone that the builders rejected

Showing that Jesus is the **stone** which **we should be building our lives on** – but unfortunately – the Jewish people mostly rejected Him as the cornerstone of their lives – thinking He was just some ordinary person/stone.

It's amazing to think this Psalm saw so clearly ahead of time - how Jesus would be rejected

But the Psalm goes on to say in v23 and v24 – the **Lord has a day in mind** – when we can rejoice and be glad

And it begins on that glorious first Palm Sunday – as Jesus rides into a victory and heads for glory – not glory in a Palace – but glory on a cross

Nonetheless – it's a **victory** because – **Jesus is victorious over sin** on **Good Friday** – and victorious over death on **Easter Sunday!**

And so, we can join with the people in Jerusalem – and join in what the Psalm says in v25-26 – and **we call out to our Messiah** – this morning

²⁵ Lord, save us! Lord, grant us success!

²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

And as v27 says – **we can have palm boughs in our hands** – and **celebrate King Jesus!**

Conclusion about who Jesus is (Matthew 21:10-11)

[Slide 2-Heading]

So, what conclusion can we make about Jesus from all of this?

That's the question the crowd grappled with in v10 when they asked that **ultimate question about Jesus** - *"Who is this?"*

Lots of people, today, don't fully understand who Jesus is?

- Some say Jesus never existed – it's just a **made-up story**
- Some see Him as a **great historical figure**
- Some say He was a Jewish hero who was **unfairly treated**
- Some say He was a great teacher or a **great leader**
- Or that He was **some sort of magician**

The crowd's answer in v11 is "*Jesus is the prophet from Nazareth*"

[Slide 2a-more than a prophet]

But He's **more than a prophet** as we've seen

As Jesus rides into Jerusalem – **He's basically saying**

I'm the ONE mentioned in Zechariah 9

I'm the ONE described in Psalm 118

I'm the Son of David – the **Promised Messiah** – the **forever King** promised to King David

I'm the Prince of Peace that Isaiah spoke about.

[Slide 2b-Jesus IS]

In fact – **Jesus IS** - the **Son of God**, the **King of Kings**, the **Lord of Lords**, the **Messiah**, the **Prince of Peace** and our **Lord and Saviour**

[Slide 2c-Acts 4:12]

As Acts 4:12 puts it: "*Salvation is found in no one else [but Jesus], for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.*"

Our Response to Palm Sunday

[Slide 3-Heading]

Who Jesus is – **demands a response** from us

[Slide 3a-don't let day go by]

1. We must not let Palm Sunday and Easter go by – **without acknowledging and believing who Jesus is** – if you're someone here today who hasn't put your faith in Jesus – **don't let this day go by.**

[Slide 3b-Share what we believe]

2. For those of us who already believe in Jesus - do we know people who have not put their faith in Jesus and rejected Him? **Do we weep over them** – like Jesus wept over the people of Jerusalem lost from God – **will we tell them about Jesus this Easter?** In our bulletin today we have an evangelism tip from David Hinton - to **help us share what we believe**

The **events of Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday** – are **pivotal to our faith** – and we can share those stories – can't we?

[Slide 3c-Give thanks to the Lord]

3. Psalm 118 – verse 1 tells us – ***Give thanks to the Lord for He is good – His love endures forever*** – it's a **refrain that's repeated five times** in the Psalm. It's repeated for a reason – because we're **meant to take on board** – the fact that **we should constantly be thankful that the Lord is always good** – and **He has shown us His love for us** – in sending Jesus – who is our **forever King and Lord and Saviour.**

[Slide 3d-Personal relationship]

4. One last thought. The people watching Jesus ride into Jerusalem that day – **watched from a distance**. Most didn't know Jesus – **up close and personal**. **Jesus wants an up close and personal relationship with us**.

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 to:

- Feed daily on His Word and meditate on it
- 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...

Father God, thank you for the pivotal events of that very first Palm Sunday.

Thank you that King Jesus was willing and able to ride into Jerusalem – knowing He would lay down His life – for sins to be forgiven – knowing that He would be victorious over sin and death – by the events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Help us to respond by giving thanks to Him and to you, Father, for your love does indeed endure forever.

Help us to share our faith with others this Easter and beyond.

Help us to feed off your word and have a closer relationship with your Son, in His name, we pray, AMEN.

Benediction (Rev 7:9-10)

Let me leave us with a **picture** of a **future Palm Sunday** – described by the Apostle John from the Book of **Revelation – chapter 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.