

The King of the Kingdom Arrives

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Date: 09 April 2017

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[0 : 0 0] well how often have we heard politicians say something like we need to send a message we need to send a message and often it's in the context of military action so a political leader might command their country's army or navy or air force to do something to show their displeasure as something an enemy has done as you know a bit of that has been happening in the world this week and in today's bible reading jesus does something himself to send a message to the people of jerusalem and to us and we'll shortly come to what he did and what his message was but it would be helpful if you had the passage in front of you and it's on page 988 of the black bibles in the seats and it's matthew chapter 21 the first part so it would be helpful if you had a bible in front of you page 988 let me pray for us as um together we open god's word let's pray heavenly father thank you for speaking to us today through your living word help us to hear what you have to say to us this morning and to apply it in our lives for your glory and we pray this in jesus name amen so let's just put ourselves in the picture um over the last few chapters jesus has been traveling south from galilee so if you remember a map of israel galilee is up the top the sea of galilee that area is called galilee that's where nazareth is where jesus grew up and jesus has been traveling south towards jerusalem and he's now approaching jerusalem from the east now to the east of jerusalem is the mount of olives i'm sure you've heard of that so there's um the mount of olives then there's a valley and then there's jerusalem which is also on a mountaintop sometimes called mount zion so it's pretty simple a bit of geography here mount of olives kidron valley and jerusalem um there's a map here which i've got which i just simply got this off google maps so it might help you so just uh on my side on this edge of the screen you can see jerusalem i think the mount of olives is pretty clear there so between jerusalem and the mount of olives is a valley the kidron valley and um down towards the bottom right hand corner are a couple of little villages mentioned uh bethany and bethphagee i'll make reference to them in a minute so we'll just leave the map up so we can refer to those places let's look at verse one of our passage as they approached jerusalem and came to bethphagee on the mount of olives jesus sent his two disciples saying to them go to the village ahead of you and at once you'll find a donkey tied there with her colt by her untie them and bring them to me now as i've indicated on the map we're actually not sure where this little village bethphagee was um but it was kind of like regarded as being on the outskirts of jerusalem the very edge of jerusalem and um jesus commands his disciples to go to the next village jesus doesn't tell us who that is which village that is um we think it was bethany and i've put the names of those villages up there bethany was also just on the edge of jerusalem only about two kilometers from jerusalem itself so not very far away you could walk it quite easily they go to the next village where they'll find a female donkey and her colt that is her baby her offspring now jesus knew people in bethany you might remember that his dear friend lazarus who he raised from

death uh was from bethany with his sisters mary and martha and jesus had organized a pre-arranged passphrase for him to obtain this donkey let's look at verse 3 jesus says to his to suit the two disciples that he said we don't know which two disciples they were he says if anyone says anything to you say that the lord needs them and he will send them right away that means he'll send them back when he's finished with them so off the disciples go they go to what we think is bethany and they see the donkey and the colt as jesus said they would and they start untying them and you can imagine the situation uh the owner says and we don't have this recorded in the bible but you can imagine it what do you think you're doing and the disciples reply with this little pre-arranged passphrase the lord needs them and the owner says no worries that's okay that's not in the scriptures i just imagine it but jesus had pre-arranged this we don't know how but it looks very much that this is what had happened now mark in his gospel tells us that the colt had never been ridden previously so the mother comes along as well to keep it calm jesus ends up riding the baby the colt and the mother is there to keep the the colt calm now in verse 7 and we can have the map off thank you in verse 7 matthew says that jesus sat on them no jesus did not sit on two donkeys at the same time the them is a reference to the cloaks that were put on top of the colt to function as a kind of a saddle and this is a picture of what jerusalem looks like from the mount of olives today you can see we're on top of a mountain the mount of olives you can see across the valley the kidron valley is jerusalem and you would realize that the scene then would be quite different to that present day scene the dome of the rock mosque is now sitting on what was the site of the great jerusalem temple and jesus would have had this beautiful vista ahead of him as he prepared to ride in to jerusalem thank you now matthew sees that in verses 4 and 5 what is about to occur is a fulfillment of a messianic prophecy from zechariah chapter 9 which was also read for us earlier let's just have another look at that verses 4 and 5 this took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet say to daughter zion see your king comes to you gentle and riding on a donkey on a colt the foal of a donkey jesus knew that he was god's promised messianic king prophesied in the old testament even the prophecy we have today from zechariah is about the messiah fulfilled in jesus but remember that in new testament times it was the roman empire who were the occupying force in this part of the world they were the dominant world power the jews were wanting this messiah that god had promised to come as a political military figure to boot out the romans so they could establish god's kingdom by force and have a bit of self-determination now you would expect that if jesus was to fulfill those kind of hopes um he wouldn't come riding into jerusalem on a donkey he'd be riding a a war horse or driving a chariot or a sherman tank or something a donkey was a lowly animal it was the animal of a man of peace and this is what i was alluding to at

the start jesus by riding this donkey into jerusalem is sending a message to the people and to us it's not a war horse it's a donkey and jesus is saying yes i am the long promised messiah but you need to understand what that means i'm not a political military liberator i'm a king of peace i continue to bring in god's kingdom not by war and conquest but by an invitation to be reconciled to god through me jesus shows us what sort of king is by doing this he's making a statement about himself and his kingship now often in the old testament um prophets would relate god's words that's the role of a prophet to to speak god's words to the people and some of the prophets actually acted out the message that they'd got from god jesus is kind of doing something similar he's actually acting out um he didn't just say i've come as god's king he actually did something to demonstrate it now it was coming up to passover time and jews from all over the known world had come to jerusalem for this great festival pardon me um you remember the passover celebrated um the exodus from egypt god's liberating of his people from egypt and one estimation is that two and a half million people had come from the known world and crowded into the city even today jerusalem only has a population of about 800 000 lots and lots of people coming into this city and jesus was very intentional about doing this for maximum exposure it wasn't a last minute idea he'd pre-arranged the donkey he knew what he was doing it was all arranged and look at the welcome he got a very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road so the cloaks and the branches were a kind of ceremonial carpet a red carpet welcome i guess for jesus to ride over uh it's john's gospel where we find out that it was palm branches in fact that were used uh often palm branches were used in celebrations of victories so maybe they're another indication that people didn't quite understand the nature of jesus kingship but people were incredibly excited uh in verse 9 matthew tells us there were crowds ahead of jesus and there were crowds behind him uh there might have been pilgrims who'd come from galilee they'd seen jesus do miracles up in galilee they knew the things he could do they'd seen the miracles and uh people maybe from around jerusalem maybe from bethany who'd known that he'd raised jesus to life they knew what this guy could do maybe they thought well he's been a bit quiet but maybe once we get to jerusalem he'll reclaim himself as king and he'll kick out the romans like we always wanted him to and look at what the people shouted hosanna to the son of david hosanna is from psalm 118 and as joellen mentioned before it means save us or save now so hosanna in the highest might mean something like let all the angels in the highest heights of heaven cry to god save now it's also possible that a lot of people just said hosanna but didn't really know what it meant but they knew it was a term of acclamation i was trying to think of an equivalent english word um and i thought of the word bravo if you go to a concert and you like the performer and think they've done a great job you might say bravo bravo does anyone know what bravo means i think it's italian for bold or brave i don't think many people

realize that i certainly didn't but people say bravo because they're commending the performer people would say hosanna they're crying out with acclaim to jesus now the expression blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord means that they did acknowledge that in some way this man jesus was from god he was sent by god he was god's representative even if they didn't fully understand what that meant or if they didn't understand that he was in fact god and in verse 10 matthew tells us that the whole city was stirred i mean this is fever pitch stuff because of jesus and the word for stirred in greek is where we get our word seismic from the whole city was shaken i'm not saying it was physically shaken i'm not saying an earthquake occurred but i'm saying that was the excitement level in the city because of the arrival of the lord jesus let's read verses uh um 10 and 11 when jesus entered jerusalem the whole city was stirred and asked who is this the crowds answered this is jesus the prophet from nazareth in galilee well prophet was probably the highest accolade that they could think of to give to jesus and the pilgrims from galilee where nazareth is where jesus grew up were probably very proud of their local hero but we know with hindsight that jesus had arrived in jerusalem as a special king king over sin over death and over evil jesus had arrived as king but the key question is have you made him your king or are you your own king from my own experience let me tell you that i would much prefer to have jesus as king of my life than for me to be king of my life he does a much better job of it than i ever could that doesn't mean i'm always obedient to him but i know i can turn to him for forgiveness when i do the wrong thing and he wants to lavish his love and forgiveness on me every time if jesus isn't your king you're not in his kingdom being subject to jesus as king means you you know his forgiveness you know that you have an eternal future with him it's something you can be certain of you can be certain that you will be in heaven because of his love and forgiveness not because of your inherent goodness but because jesus forgives you he washes your sins away and that god calls you his child what a wonderful thing to be known as god's child it's the most important decision you will ever make and so we come to the second part of our passage where jesus enters the temple area let's read verses 12 and 13 jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there he overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves it is written he said to them my house will be called a house of prayer but you are making it a den of robbers so let's have a look at a diagram of the temple in jesus time now it's not particularly clear the different sections but you will see at the top a big sort of open area and that was the court of the gentiles a gentile is someone who is not a jew that's all the word gentile means someone who's not a jew most of us i expect will be classed as gentiles and different groups of people could go into different sections so

anyone could go into the court of the gentiles only jewish people could go into the next inner part beyond that only jewish men could go into the next inner part beyond that only the priest could go into the next part and there was one room where only the high priest could go and only on one day of the year a day called the day of atonement so as you went further into the center of the temple i guess there was more and more restrictions now people came to the temple especially at the passover time to make offerings of money and also to make sacrifices of animals part of the sacrificial system of the time but people had to make their offerings their monetary offerings with a particular coinage tyrian coinage and so people had to get their currency changed like we might do at an airport if we're going overseas now people also sacrificed animals or brought them for sacrifice and you can imagine if you were a pilgrim coming from a long distance it's just impractical to have to bring your animals with you so you could buy them at the temple and then they would be sacrificed the issue was that the money changers and the traders of the animals had set up their stalls in the court of the gentiles in the temple itself in the only part of the temple where non-jews could pray remember they can't go any other parts of the temple just the court of the gentiles and here we have this little market atmosphere i mean it wasn't an atmosphere conducive to praying or to worshipping god and you would think that the gentiles might be searching for god trying to find you know what is life all about who is this god you know and they're on the edge of the temple precincts as it is and now they're just being inhibited by all this bargaining and selling that's going on i mean it'd be a bit like trying to pray in the middle of the queen victoria market i mean it's possible i couldn't do it but some people could it would be hard with all the noise and can you imagine the smell i mean i was trying to imagine what would it be like and my mind went back to the chicken pavilion at the royal melbourne show i've got nothing against chickens all the people who keep them but i don't think i could pray in a chicken coop it would stink and be noisy and the smell would probably even carry over into the jewish sections anyway so even the jews would have a hard time of having a prayerful time so jesus protest was actually about where these stalls were set up they shouldn't be in the temporal precincts i mean it's fair enough that they for various reasons they had to get their coins changed that's okay it's fair enough that they wanted to set up stalls to sell the sacrificial animals because that was their system i know it's not pleasant to think about sacrificing animals that was the system it's fair enough that they were making animals available at around the temple but not in the temple maybe outside the temple but not in the temple no wonder jesus got angry not only that worshippers were being ripped off by some of these stallholders this was jesus temple he had authority to do what he did it was another way of him declaring his kingship and it's quite perverted to think that this is the very place the temple is the very place where the jews regarded god as dwelling god dwelt

[20 : 20] they understood in the temple that was his dwelling place on earth and at the very place where god was regarded as dwelling jewish people were being ripped off as they tried to worship their lord quite perverted when you think about it were the stalls set up again the next day probably we're not told but jesus had made his point and and we think that there may have been a couple of occasions where jesus did actually do this demonstration in the temple there's disputes about how many times it may have been once it may have been twice from the gospels so i guess for us we need to build each other up as we worship god together and not be like um the stallholders um and and put barriers in the way of people coming to our church to worship god i'm not saying there's something wrong with selling things in the pickering room after church i'm not saying that at all i'm just saying what happened here was a barrier to worship are there any barriers that we as a church erect to visitors that come to our church or to one another that hinder our worship of god i can't think of any to be honest with you but it's something that we should be aware of and think about let's look at our final verses this morning verse 14 the blind and the lame came to him at the temple and he healed them but when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts hosanna to the son of david they were indignant isn't it wonderful to see jesus exercising his kingly rule and healing people right in the temple he was extending god's kingdom by doing this i've always found it amazing that the chief priests and the teachers of the law they saw we're told they saw the wonderful things he did and they were angry i mean if i saw jesus give sight to a blind person or make a lame person walk i'd just say who is this guy this is wonderful i'd be so happy for the people who'd been healed i'd be in awe of jesus yet despite this the chief priests and the teachers of the law were indignant i mean how spiritually blind can you get we may know people like that people who just don't seem to be able to see jesus for who he truly is i'm not condemning them for one moment you might be related to someone like that you might love them to bits they may be your child they may be your spouse or your parent or your friend keep praying for them don't give up praying for them pray that they would see jesus for themselves and accept everything that he offers them don't stop praying for them and the kids we're told were shouting in the temple area hosanna to the son of david they may have not fully understood what they were shouting but they were praising jesus and jesus accepts the praise even from very young children isn't that wonderful what a lovely thought my mind actually turned to our dear brother oliver gamble a lot of you know oliver i think he attends mainly the 10 30 service oliver has down syndrome he's nearly 40 years old his mum was telling me the other day and you may have heard him say i love jesus and i know it means it what of a wonderful god we have

who accepts humble worship from all who trust in him whether young children people like oliver who are differently abled or ourselves we do have a loving and gracious heavenly father who just wants to be our king so many of them i have to be a author of jesus my father and ha over the nathells and hubert and how they know