

Matthew 21-03-28b

Thank you Dan and Anna and Lori for There Is A Fountain. I was telling the assembly here this is such a wonderful hymn and a reminder. I like the verse where it says the dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day and there may I though vile as he wash all my sins away.

And I often, it's one of the few hymns I can actually play and I'll often play it when I'm testing a piano after I've tuned it and those words always return to my mind. We're no better than the dying thief but our faith, our acceptance and looking to the Lord is all that is required and that is a theme in our passage as we pick it up this morning. We're looking at the entry of the Lord Jesus into Jerusalem in the days just prior to Passover.

This is the first day of the week and as you return to John chapter 12 which is where we left off, fear not daughter of Zion behold your king is coming sitting on a donkey's colt. Notice verse 16, his disciples did not understand these things at first but when Jesus was glorified then they remembered that these things were written about him and that they had done these things to him. In the turmoil and the trauma and the shock of the crucifixion all of this escaped the minds of the disciples but after he was glorified, now when was he glorified? Little pop quiz question, when was Jesus glorified? What do you think? Was he glorified at the point that he died on the cross? Was he glorified when he was buried? Was he glorified when he arose from the dead and spoke in the garden? When was he glorified? Acts chapter 1 when he ascended and was caught up into the clouds? That's the entire process of course.

It's kind of like what is the coming? What is the second coming of the Lord Jesus? It begins at the rapture and ends at the second coming. It spans a period of time. All of these things build and are a part of his glorification but remember you can go to Philippians chapter 2 which is easy.

I quote it almost every Bible class that the glorification of the Lord Jesus is his place of honor at the right hand of the Father. Humble himself became obedient to death even the death of the cross. For this reason God hath highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name.

You can go to Hebrews, you can go to 2 or 3 different places and see that he is now at the Father's right hand where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Stephen saw him there in I believe it's Acts chapter 6 somewhere in that area. His exaltation, his seat of honor, that is his glorification.

So when Jesus was glorified they didn't really think back on this for about a month and a half. You remember that Pentecost is 50 days after, right? It starts at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, you count 50 days right after Passover and then you get to Pentecost. And Jesus is appearing to his disciples and to upwards of 500 for about 40

days after his resurrection and so he is not seen for about a week and then Pentecost takes place.

It's interesting to do the math and find out that there was this hiatus between the last appearance of the Lord Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit. There is that quiet week. Noah has a quiet week.

The land of Israel is going to have a quiet time after the post-exilic prophets that we're looking at on Thursday night where there will be kind of dead air as we say in radio between Malachi and the ministry of John the Baptist. And we'll have more to say about that in our post-exilic prophet study. But in verse 16 of John 12, they remembered after his glorification what was written about him.

They began to piece together what was written, that's Old Testament, nothing is written in the days following Jesus' ascension. So what was written is Old Testament prophecy and they began to put together belatedly his fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Verse 17, therefore the people who were with him when he called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness.

For this reason the people also met him because they heard that he had done this sign. They heard about the raising of Lazarus. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, you see that you are accomplishing nothing.

All of their different stratagems, their plots, let's try to kill Lazarus, let's tangle him in his words, let's embarrass him in front of the people, let's stump him with hard questions, render unto Caesar and so on. They said, you see you're accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.

And you remember that in these days and in the centuries preceding, the world to Israel was Israel. The land is the world. They don't believe that Africa and Northern Europe has gone after who has gone after the Lord Jesus.

They say pretty much universally in this land of Israel, everyone has gone after him. Now back to Matthew chapter 21. We have two questions to answer here.

If this whole emphasis on being the king is problematic, why did Jesus prearrange to ride into town on the donkey? Because this was Jesus doing, the people didn't spontaneously grab a donkey and set Jesus on it. Jesus planned this. Jesus engineers this approach and we find out in Matthew that Jesus did it.

You know, there's sometimes we've seen in Matthew where belatedly someone says, oh, he grew up in Nazareth and this was to fulfill the prophecy in the Old Testament, he will be called a Nazarene. Mary and Joseph didn't say, we've got to move to Nazareth so that our son can be called a Nazarene. The resonance of the prophecy and the application of it comes more by happenstance than by purpose.

I'm not going to go do this so that scripture will be fulfilled. This is an odd occasion because look at verse two and three in chapter 21 of Matthew. Jesus gives these two disciples the specific instructions to go to the village and get the donkey and the colt.

All this was done that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet in verse four. A normal human author would wait and put verse four and five after the actual entry. But the instructions that Jesus gives, the plan that Jesus has for this entry is consciously on his part to fulfill this Zachariah prophecy.

This is Zachariah 9.9. This is something we're going to see because what kind of prophet is Zachariah? Is he pre-exilic, exilic or post-exilic? He's one of the three Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi. So we're going to be covering 9.9 some months into the future. But Jesus engineers this.

Matthew tells us specifically Jesus does this in the light of the Zachariah 9.9 prophecy. That's key. A very good question is why does Jesus ride in on a donkey? How many times has he been to Jerusalem where he just walked in? I think people who hear that he is on his way, he's proceeding slowly down the Mount of Olives heading toward the Kidron Valley and going to go the other slope and come into Jerusalem and he's riding a donkey.

Oh, it's king time. Cut some branches, throw some clothes. But Matthew tells us that the instructions and the inception of this particular arrival, this very public, very symbolic arrival, this is the way the king will arrive, is to fulfill prophecy, is to resonate with this Zachariah prophecy.

Now, why does Jesus do this? Of course, it's always one of the first things they taught me as an English major is you cannot determine an author's intent. You can't, you know, they would have us write papers. And what did Tennessee Williams mean in this play? And what did Eugene O'Neill, what was his intention when he wrote this way and staged things this way and put these words in these characters' mouths? What was he thinking? And boy, you could lose big points if you ever use that kind of phraseology.

The commentator, the critic, the analyst cannot determine author's intent. So it is with some intrepidation, not intrepidation, maybe it is intrepid. It's intrepidation to ascertain what Jesus' intention is in doing this.

And I've given you this rather lengthy apology because it's an idea I don't know if anybody else has ever had. And there may be good reasons for that. It may be a really bad idea.

Sometimes when you're out on a limb or in the unbroken snow, you really have no business being there. But let me tell you what I think. And it's based on the clothes.

I told you before the break, this time it's not about the bread, but there's a lot about the clothes. What did Jesus not say? He said, get the donkey, get the colt. If anybody asks

you, tell them I need them, bring them.

And Jesus gets on the colt that has never been ridden before. So this is a new thing and he's not riding the larger, older donkey, the dam, the mother. He's riding the colt that is just now old enough and strong enough to be ridden.

And it's never been ridden before. And it is a sign of humility. He's not riding in on the white horse that he is going to ride at the end of the tribulation.

There's Jesus coming on the foal of a donkey at the end of the time of Jacob's trouble. He is on a big white horse. That's the time when he is coming as the conquering king.

And he doesn't come on the foal of a donkey, does he? So what is this thing about the foal of the donkey? Well, let me reserve part of this for when we cover Zechariah nine, uh, about why it is the colt on the surface of it. And the plain simple meaning is that Jesus is fulfilling what he has said all along. My, uh, come into me, uh, those of you who labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest.

I am meek and lowly of heart. Uh, my, uh, you come to me and you will find rest for your souls. But Jesus says, I am meek and lowly of heart.

And he is not coming with ostentation. He is not, uh, making a claim. He is identifying himself with old Testament prophecy as the king.

Zion of course is associated with the government, not the temple. So when the disciples bring the donkey, what did they do that Jesus did not tell them to do? We, we saw how carefully the owner of the donkey and colt operate and the two disciples that went in and obtained them and brought them back. All of that was, was just great.

Where do they start operating beyond their instructions and coloring outside the lines? Look at verse seven. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them and set him on them, laid their clothes. Then what happens? A very great multitude spread their clothes on the road.

Others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Now, what is this? What is the motivation for doing all of this? Hooray, here comes the king, right? Why is Jesus introduced as the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world? Why does the sin of the world need to be taken away? It starts with judge and ends with ment. Judgment has to be accomplished.

Sin must be judged before you can have the peaceable kingdom. You cannot have the kingdom without dealing with sin and death. Jesus is going to say at the end of the Bible, I have the keys of hell and of death.

What does he tell Martha in John chapter 11? I am the resurrection and the life. The one

who lives and believes in me will never die. How is death overcome? It is through the judgment on sin.

The wages of sin is death. If you're going to get rid of death, you've got to judge sin. This takes a little bit of computation.

How has Jesus been talking to these very same crowds now for months? He says nothing except in parables, right? Which requires that they have enough faith to parse scripture, to parse the inspired word of God. If they don't have faith, they're going to miss its point. They ought to be thinking about what Jesus says and thinking about what Jesus does.

And they're not. They're taking it at superficial, face value, knee-jerk reaction. So they throw these clothes.

Now, here's the thing. Here's the point. There is only one other place in the Bible where people throw clothes in front of the king.

There's only one other time. Can you think of when it was? Turn with me to 2 Kings chapter 9. 2 Kings chapter 9. Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets and said to him, get yourself ready. Take this flask of oil in your hand.

Now remember, these are the days where in the early chapters of 2 Kings, minister of Elisha, you've recently had Ahab and Jezebel and Athaliah and all of the huge evil. Ahab and Jezebel in the northern kingdom, Athaliah goes down to Judah. You've just got evil running rampant all over the place, right? That's what was going on in the day.

Remember Elijah, Ahab, Jezebel. Jezebel says, may the Lord do so to me and more also, which the Lord is going to do if I do not make your life like the one of those prophets of Baal. Anyway, that's the context here.

So Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets and said to him, get yourself ready. Take this flask of oil in your hand and go to Ramoth Gilead. Elisha does not do this himself.

He sends a lesser prophet, an unknown, unnamed prophet. Let me say again, he does not go himself and untithed, I mean, anoint. He sends an unknown, unnamed person to do this job, just as Jesus is going to do with the cult.

Elisha does with this anointing. When you arrive at that place, look there for Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, go in and make him rise up from among his associates and take him to an inner room, private. Take the flask of oil, pour it on his head and say, thus says the Lord, I have anointed you king over Israel.

Then open the door and run away. Not the senior prophet, an unknown, unnamed guy. And he's going to go into an unknown, unnamed inner room.

And he's going to do this anointing in secret. And then he is going to flee. So the young man, the servant of the prophet went to Ramoth Gilead, did exactly what he was told.

He did exactly what Elisha told him to do. When he arrived, captains of the army are sitting there. He said, I have a message for you, commander.

Jehu said, for which one of us? He said, for you, commander. He arose, went into the house, poured the oil on his head, said to him, thus says the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed you king over the people of Israel, the people of the Lord. You shall strike down the house of Ahab, your master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants, the prophets and the blood of all the servants of the Lord at the hands of Jezebel, for the whole house of Ahab shall perish.

And I will cut off from Ahab all the males in Israel, both bond and free. What is going to happen as soon as Jehu is crowned king? It starts with judge and ends with mint. As soon as he is anointed, judgment is going to come upon the people of God, the house of God, the nation of God.

I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha, the son of Ahijah. The dogs shall eat Jezebel on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her. And he opened the door and fled, did exactly what he was told to do.

So keep reading now, watch. Jehu came out to the servants of his master, and one said to him, Is all well? Why did this madman come to you? He said, You know the man and his babble. And they said, A lie, tell us now.

So he said, Thus and thus he spoke to me, saying, Thus says the Lord, I have anointed you king over Israel. Then, verse 13, each man hastened to take his garment and put it under him on top of the steps, and they blew the trumpets, saying, Jehu is king. This is the other time people put garments under the king.

What part of the message did Jehu tell these guys? And what part did he not tell them? Well, the Lord has anointed me king. Hooray, throw my clothes down under you. You're the king.

This is going to be great. But we don't have time to read this in detail. We'll see it before long.

But look at verse 14. So Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. Joram is the current king of Israel.

And so he's going to do the writing like the writing of Jehu, and the chariot is going to be approaching. And Jehu gets approached by a messenger and a second messenger. You remember this story.

And in verse 22, Joram saw Jehu and he said, Is it peace, Jehu? Why does everyone want Jesus to be the king? He's the breadmaker. He will get the Romans off our back. We will have peace.

Is it peace, Jehu? He answered, What peace? As long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft are so many. Can there be peace and prosperity and provision and blessing in Israel when her harlotries are so many in the days of the scribes and Pharisees and chief priests? No. Anybody who could think and remember their scriptures would say, Wait a minute, the last time we threw clothes underneath an approaching king, you know what immediately followed? Judgment.

Jehu drew his bow with full strength, verse 24, and shot Joram between his arms. And the arrow came out of his heart and he sank down in his chariot. Pick him up and throw him in the field of Naboth that Ahab stole with Jezebel's blessing and encouragement.

I saw the blood of Naboth and the blood of his son, says the Lord. Notice in verse 26, you have another one of these days that is not a day. Surely I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons, says the Lord.

And I will repay you in this plot, says the Lord. Take him and throw him on the plot of ground according to the word of the Lord. You can see the next section there, Ahaziah, the king of Judah, flees trying to get away.

Jehu pursued him and said, shoot him also, shoot him right in the chariot. So Ahaziah gets shot in the chariot. He fled to Megiddo and died.

Servants carried him in the chariot to Jerusalem, buried him. Then in the chapter closes verse 30 through 37 with the judgment and the death on Jezebel. Three different deaths follow, close under Jehu's feet.

It is a time of judgment. It is an anointing that is not public. When those who realize that he's the king are not aware that he has been made king to be judge first.

So warning music should play under the scene of the people throwing clothes in the road under the Lord, Jesus, and even throwing clothes on the back of the colt. The prophecy in Zacharias says nothing about clothes. The only time you have anything talking about, well, let me put my clothes down.

And this is a, this is an easy contribution. A donkey walking across your clothes doesn't hurt them. You're out.

Nothing. There's no sacrifice. There's no real service.

This is a superficial recognition. It is a, uh, you know, the, the, the donkey walks by, you can pick it right back up at worst. You might have to, to wash it, but it's not torn.

It's not destroyed. It's not donated. It's not given away.

You'd lose nothing. It's a cheap form of celebration and approval. The, the branches and things that they are cutting down and putting in, in the road and waving don't belong to them.

It's, it's a cheap celebration. It's a cheap recognition and it's misguided. They do not understand.

And this is why Jesus is going to go into the city. Turn back to Mark now, Mark chapter nine, as we close this morning and, and close our look at this day in history, if you will. I said nine, I mean 11, Mark 11, uh, verse nine, those who went before and those who followed that's your two crowds.

Uh, Hosanna, Hosanna is, we talked a Thursday night about, uh, uh, the, the name Joshua that, that comes from yeshah, which means to save Hosanna, change the H to a J and it's Joshua nah, which means save now, literally save now. But by this time it had become such a, a kind of a hackneyed praise phrase. It's like today, when you say goodbye, what is the origin of the word goodbye? God be with ye and it's been mashed and shortened down to goodbye.

And the worst atheists in the world will say goodbye and they don't mean God be with you. God be with you till we meet again. Well, that's what Hosanna had turned into by this time.

But what does it mean as it comes out of their mouth? It literally speaks to what they do not understand what comes out of their mouth. This people honors me with their lips. Save, save us now.

Hosanna, save now. What kind of salvation do these people need? Not deliverance from the Romans, not provision of bread. It is the judgment of sin and, and release from the sting of death.

That's what they need. And they're mouthing the words, save, save, be our savior. But they've jumped straight to the throne and, and the crown.

And Jesus knew they would do so. There are times when Jesus will speak a parable, will work a miracle, will do a symbolic act. And the response is like the response to God's miracles.

When he was releasing Israel from Egypt, knowing that it is going to expose the hard heart of Pharaoh, and it is going to expose the hearts of people who though they have seen these mighty signs and wonders, do not repent, change their minds and believe. And you remember the one explanation of Pharaoh's hard heart is, well, what kind of heart do you have? If it's made of wax, then the warmth of the sun melts it. If it's made

of clay, then the warmth of the sun hardens it.

What kind of heart do you decide you are going to have? Pharaoh's heart is of the clay type. And when exposed to God, it hardens. His is a reaction, not a response.

So Jesus riding into town on this colt of a donkey exposes this huge belief, the multitude behind him and the multitude in front of him. Okay, finally, we're going to throw off the Romans. It's going to be the civil kingdom.

They're thinking nothing of the lamb, nothing of the sacrifice, nothing of the judgment. And as they throw these clothes down, what they do not realize is they are literally paving the way for the judgment of God, which is going to come on this very city within 70 years. And their superficiality, their lack of understanding is on full display.

All Jesus has to do is sit on the colt of a donkey and it outs the misunderstanding and bad attitudes, false priorities, insensitivity to sin and to harlotry that God judged Israel for in the days of Jehu. And he judges them for it again when he comes into his own and his own actually receive him, not even in this celebration. A few days from now, many in this same crowd are going to be shouting, crucify him, crucify him.

We have no king, but Caesar today, he's our king. But in our fickle, shallow hearts tomorrow, we have no king, but Caesar let his blood be on us and on the heads of our children, because we don't take seriously who he really is. That's why it is the tragic entry.

That's why this is face Palm Sunday. That's why Jesus is going to stand on the brow of the hill and weep over Jerusalem. How long I would have gathered you under my wings like a hen gathers her chicks, but you would have none of me, the actual me, the real Lord Jesus, who is the suffering servant and is there to be wounded for sin and bruised for iniquities so that by his stripes, they and we could be healed.

And they completely missed the point. Well, there's much more we could talk about. I could regale you for the entire rest of the morning with the significance of the fig tree, which is going to happen the following day with its leaves and the promise of either late figs from the previous season or early figs from the current season, because it is so full of leaves.

And even though it's not the season for figs, it was in a favored position perhaps to be unlike the other fig trees and actually have all of these leaves. It got better soil, better sun, better water, should have had some of this fruit and Jesus goes to it. And all he says is, you're going to have no more fruit.

Oh, long Ace Ionios unto the ages. May you bear no more fruit forever. He doesn't say in anger, die.

Oh tree. He just says, may you bear no more fruit. And when they come back Tuesday morning, how long would it take to understand that that tree was never going to bear fruit again? It would be decades, right? Figs are very slow growing and long live trees to understand the import of what Jesus said would take decades.

But in one day, the tree is not only fruitless, it is shriveled and dead. It is dry brown and completely dead. And then Jesus is going to make a point about faith, but we're going to save that for next Sunday, resurrection Sunday, because you don't have resurrection unless you first have death.

And out of death comes life. Out of judgment comes grace and blessing and opportunity for us. And this is what the Lord Jesus accomplished in our behalf.

Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. We want to be wise. We want to not stop with the superficial parsing of circumstance, but stop and think, what do the scriptures teach us? Who am I? Why am I here? What should I be thinking in these troublous time? But let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for the spend time looking directly at the Lord Jesus, his ministry of reconciliation to make it possible for us to pray this prayer and to rely on you for our daily needs and our future hope. We pray that as we reflect on this portion of your word that God, the Holy Spirit will minister it to us, help us to be wise, to have insight and understanding, to understand the parables, to understand the words and works of the Lord Jesus in a way that is meaningful and provides guidance and illumination for us so that we can reflect his glory in yours now and in the ages to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.