

In what is known as His triumphal entry, Jesus arrives at Jerusalem for what will be His final week before His crucifixion. He is presenting Himself as the Messiah by fulfilling the prophecies that predicted that the Messiah would enter the city riding on the colt of an ass. However, despite the temporary excitement of His arrival, the Jews would soon be crying out that He should be crucified.

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1 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, 2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. 3 And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

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**“And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem”** – Although the gospel of John records that Jesus had made trips to Jerusalem before during His earthly ministry (typically during the Passover), this is Jesus’ only visit to Jerusalem recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke. This visit will be His final before the crucifixion; He will not return to Galilee again until after His resurrection.

**“and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives”** – The Mount of Olives is about a mile to the east of Jerusalem. Bethphage (“house of figs”) seems to be a sister village to the nearby village of Bethany. Bethany was between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives while Bethphage was on the SE slope of the mountain facing Jerusalem on the road between Jericho and Jerusalem.

**“then sent Jesus two disciples...”** - None of the gospels identify which two disciples were sent into Bethphage. Jesus demonstrates His omniscience by telling the two disciples exactly where to go and what they will find when they get there. He instructs them how they should respond when the owners question why they are taking the animals. Mark’s account emphasizes that everything happened as Jesus predicted. Jesus is about to fulfill prophecy and everything necessary for it to happen will providentially fall into place.

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4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

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The purpose of the ass and its colt was to fulfill Messianic prophecy. Matthew quotes from two different prophecies, combining elements from the two, which was a common Jewish practice. In this case, the first part comes from **Isa. 62:11**: “Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, *Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.*” The second part comes from **Zech. 9:9**: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”

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6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, 7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon.

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The two disciples obeyed and brought the ass and its colt. Then the rest of the disciples put their outer garments on the animals in order to make riding more comfortable on whichever one Jesus chose to use. It was the practice of Israeli kings to ride asses in times of peace to show their humble service to the people and horses in times of war. Although Jesus will enter Jerusalem in the future riding a white horse in judgment (Rev. 19:11), here He is presenting Himself as the peaceful Messiah offering grace, peace and salvation to the Jews.

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8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.

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The multitude likely was mostly composed of people who had followed Jesus from Galilee, possibly joined by residents of Jerusalem who had gotten caught up in the excitement of Jesus entering the city. The Greek word translated as “a very great” can also be translated “most of; the majority” so it’s unclear if Matthew is describing the size of the crowd or what percentage of it was carpeting the road in front of Jesus. It was a common ancient practice to honor royalty by paving their path with clothing and palm branches, and so they were recognizing, at least superficially, that Jesus was the King of the Jews.

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9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

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“Hosanna” is the English transliteration of the Greek transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning “Save now!” The multitude that both preceded and followed Jesus as He entered the city were referring to Jesus as the source of salvation, quoting from **Psalms 118:25-26** - “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.” The fact that they referred to Jesus as the Son of David is additional evidence that they were recognizing Jesus as their Messiah. However, the city itself did not recognize Jesus as such, particularly the Jewish leadership and so Luke 19:41-44 records that Jesus wept over Jerusalem because of the judgment that was coming because they did not recognize their Messiah and repent. He predicted the destruction of the city in A.D. 70 after a five month siege by the Roman general Titus.

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10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? 11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

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**“And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved [to shake], saying, Who is this?”** - Matthew uses a word to describe how Jesus entered Jerusalem to let us know that Jesus did not sneak into the city “under the RADAR” but that His entrance caused such a disturbance that the entire city became aware of His arrival. People in the city began asking who it was that was creating such a commotion.

**“And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee”** – The multitude that were shouting “Hosanna!” answer the question of the people of Jerusalem. Oddly, they do not introduce Jesus as the Messiah but merely as a prophet from Nazareth.

12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, 13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Jesus immediately goes to the temple and casts the merchants and moneychangers out of the temple. This is the second time that Jesus did this (John 2:14-16) and one commentator suggests that by doing so Jesus was at least partially fulfilling the Messianic prophesy of **Mal. 3:1-3**: “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.” The merchants sold animals that worshipers needed for offering sacrifices and the moneychangers converted Roman currency to the currency required by the temple for monetary collections. However, neither were fair or honest in their prices or rates of exchange which is why Jesus ran them out of the temple and called them thieves. It is also significant that Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem exactly coincided with the end of Daniel’s 69<sup>th</sup> week (483 years) to the very day, thus fulfilling the prophesy given to Daniel in **Daniel 9:25**: “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.” This 483-year span of time began when the Persian king Artaxerxes authorized Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall (Neh. 2:1-8) and ended on the day of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

Jesus continued to show compassion by healing the sick as He had been doing in fulfillment of Messianic prophecies. **Luke 4:18** “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.”

15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased,

“**And when the chief priests and scribes saw**” – No doubt the chief priests and scribes came out to see what was the source of all the excitement.

“**the wonderful [amazing] things that he did**” – This included not only the driving of the moneychangers out of the temple and the healing of the sick but perhaps also the manner in which Jesus entered the city.

“**and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David**” – The Greek word for “children” is masculine here and so it was likely young boys running around the temple area shouting what they had heard the multitudes shouting as Jesus entered the city. As children, they had probably gotten caught up in the enthusiasm of the multitude as well as the excitement of seeing Jesus heal the sick.

“**they were sore displeased [indignant]**” – The chief priests and scribes became very annoyed and indignant because they did not like the idea of Jesus portraying Himself as the Messiah or people proclaiming Him to be the Messiah.

16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

“**And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say?**” - The chief priests and scribes were saying to Jesus “Do you not hear what these children are saying?” They obviously expected Him to be embarrassed because the children were attributing praise to Him that should be reserved for the Messiah alone, and as far as they were concerned He could not possibly be the Messiah. They believed Jesus ought to have made the children stop.

“**And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected [to strengthen; to make complete] praise?**” - Jesus answers that yes, He did hear what these children were saying. Instead of being embarrassed, Jesus instead declares that He is worthy of such praise by quoting from **Psalms 8:2**: “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.” This psalm speaks of praise being offered to God, so by quoting this verse as a defense of what the children were saying Jesus was claiming that, like God, He was as worthy of such praise.

**Verses 17-46:** After this, Jesus goes to the nearby village of Bethany to spend the night and returns to the city the next morning. Jesus curses a fig tree for not having figs and uses the fact that it withered to teach the disciples about praying in faith. Upon returning to the temple Jesus begins teaching and the chief priests and elders challenge Jesus’ authority to do the things He has been doing. Jesus agrees to tell them if they can tell Him by what authority that John the Baptist came baptizing. When they refused to say, Jesus declined to name His authority. Jesus then uses a parable to ask the question of who does the will of God: those who say they will do it and don’t or those who refuse but later repent and do the will of God? When the chief priests and elders implicate themselves by their answer, Jesus declares that the publicans and harlots would enter the kingdom ahead of them. He then tells a parable of a landowner who leased a vineyard to some farmers and when he sent servants to collect his portion the farmers beat and killed the servants. Finally he sends his son thinking that they will show respect to his son but instead they kill the son with the idea of seizing his inheritance. Jesus asks what will be the landowner’s response to what these farmers have done and they reply that he will destroy the wicked farmers and find other farmers that will give the landowner the fruit he deserves. Jesus declares that the kingdom of God will be taken from them and given to those who will bring forth fruits of repentance. When the chief priests and elders realize that they had implicated themselves with their own answer again they want to arrest Jesus. However, they were afraid to do this because they knew it would cause a riot since the people believed Jesus to be a prophet of God.