

Matthew 21 New International Version (NIV)

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.”

Jesus at the Temple

¹² 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. ¹³ “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.’”

¹⁴ The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ “Do you hear what these children are saying?” they asked him.

“Yes,” replied Jesus, “have you never read,

“‘From the lips of children and infants
you, Lord, have called forth your praise’?”

¹⁷ And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

1. Matthew wants us to know that Jesus is the Messiah by showing us how he fulfilled prophecies about the Messiah. Where in our story today does Matthew quote some Old Testament prophetic scriptures?

2. The “crowds” cut branches from the trees and spread them and their cloaks on the road to make a path for Jesus to enter the city, shouting Hosanna. What does this indicate that the crowds believed about Jesus?

3. What was going on in the Temple that made Jesus declare it to be a “den of robbers?”

4. Jesus cast out the money changers from the Temple, who then did he welcome in verse 14? What was the reaction of the chief priests and teachers of the Law to what Jesus was doing in the Temple?

5. What do you think is the significance of the children singing praises about Jesus? What kinds of things make children sing praises today?

6. Why do you think Jesus left Jerusalem and returned to Bethany and spent the night there?

Points to ponder...

How easily the children could understand the significance of who Jesus was by their observation of his miracles, his teaching, his inclusion of the marginalized (including children) as welcome in his presence. Yet how difficult it was for the religiously trained to accept Jesus and his teachings. What do you think were some of the stumbling blocks for them toward believing in Jesus?

The crowd was welcoming and supportive of Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem, but later the crowd cried out for his crucifixion. What caused the change?

The triumphal entry into Jerusalem was seen by the people as a sign of Jesus’ messiahship. What ways did the religious leaders later act to humiliate Jesus as they mocked his kingship?

How did God exalt Jesus as the King of Kings that he is?