

## Matthew 21:1-11

Finally, Jesus arrives at Jerusalem on what we know as “Palm Sunday.”

It is significant that Jesus deliberately chose to enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

**Nowhere else in the Gospel do we read about Jesus traveling on an animal.**

Everywhere else He traveled, Jesus went on foot over land and on boat over sea (and one time on foot over the sea when He walked on the water!) – but we never find Him riding on a donkey – except when He enters Jerusalem.

- Why this new mode of transportation?

### **Zechariah 9:9-10**

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass...He shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

By riding into Jerusalem on a young donkey, Jesus, without saying a single word, was shouting out, “I am the Messiah-King coming to take my throne in Jerusalem!”

If there were any questions about Who Jesus was, this action would have removed all doubt. Why?

1 Kings 1:1-4 Now King David was old and advanced in years...

**The big question was:** Who will succeed David? He has many wives and multiple sons, therefore, who will be the next King?

- Adonijah is the oldest living son (2:22)
- Wouldn't one assume he would be the next king?
- Adonijah does assume this.

1 Kings 1:5-10 Adonijah prepares to take the throne by gathering Joab, the general, Abiathar the priest, chariots, horsemen and fifty handpicked warriors to run before him.

1 Kings 1:11 Nathan gets wind of Adonijah's plan to ascend the throne

Nathan tells Bathsheba...

But David promised Bathsheba that Solomon would be King

So Bathsheba goes to David to get it straight.

1 Kings 1:30 David confirms; Solomon is to reign after him.

1 Kings 1:33 “Cause Solomon to ride on my own mule”

1 Kings 1:38-40 Solomon is anointed King

Matthew 21:10 “All the city was stirred” (1 Kings 1:40)

Matthew 21:8 Spread their garments

- 2 Kings 9:13 – Elisha and Jehu
- Palm branches
  - 2 Mac 10:1-9 – Antiochus IV (Syrian) Epiphanes
    - Why did they turn on Jesus in one week?
    - They expected him to be like Judas Mac
    - Judas cleansed the temple from Gentiles
    - Jesus cleanses it from the leaders of Israel so that it would be a house of prayer for the Gentiles, for all nations.

**Matthew 21:13** My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a “den of robbers.”

- Jeremiah 7:11-14 – Predicting the destruction of the first temple

Jesus quoted a passage from Isaiah 56, which should be read in its context.

- Isaiah 56:7-8 – My house shall be a house of prayer for all peoples.

**Isaiah 56** emphasized the universality of God’s plan of salvation. It described how the Lord will gather even the Gentiles – the non-Jews – to Himself in the New Covenant era.

In fact, the verse which Jesus quoted tells how He wants peoples from all nations to come to the Jerusalem Temple to worship Him:

- “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples” (Is. 56:7-8)

Jesus quoted Is 56 in order to recall Israel’s mission to gather the nations together to worship the one true God.

However, rather than being a source of bringing in the Gentiles, the Temple in Jesus’ day had become a source of keeping them out. No other institution stood out more as Israel’s national identity marker, setting the Jews apart from the non-Jews.

An inscription over the entryway to the Temple’s inner courts made the point crystal clear:

- No alien may enter within the barrier and wall around the Temple. Whoever is caught is alone responsible for the death which follows.

Many interpret Jesus’ statement about the Temple becoming a “den of robbers” to be a denunciation of the commercialism which supposedly had entered God’s house.

However, *lestai*, the Greek word translated as “robbers” or “thieves” actually referred to much more than swindling merchants.

- It referred to those who killed and destroyed while stealing.

In the first century, the word *lestai* could be used to describe revolutionaries who wanted to take up arms against the Romans. The Temple had become a focal point for Israel’s resistance to Roman occupation. Resistance to the Gentiles. A far cry from their original mission in Ex. 19:6.

When Jesus said, “You made this house a den of *lestai*, he was not primarily condemning economic exploitation.

Rather, He was reminding them that the Jerusalem Temple was meant to be a light to the nations, a house of prayer for all peoples, but its leaders had made it a point of focus for the resistance against Gentiles.

**Exodus 19:6** This unique dignity offered to Israel is not because of some intrinsic holiness that they possess, but because they are the “firstborn” among the nations. **Exodus 4:22**

- The firstborn is blessed in service to the rest of the family.
- Israel is called to take on the role as a kingdom of priests as a service to the whole world.
- This is why God singles Israel out from the rest of the nations, so as to form them in His ways so that they may then serve the other nations as the eldest sibling.
- Golden Calf incident

**The Book of Exodus concludes with this:** Rather than all 12 tribes being priestly to go out to the rest of the world, now only one tribe is priestly (Levites). Their mission is to the other 11 tribes. Israel is now in a holding pattern. Can Israel just maintain the faith and not be corrupted by the pagan nations who live around them until the time of the Messiah when Israel will finally have its royal priestly mission reestablished and set out into the world? **See 1 Peter 2:4-5,9-10**

**Matthew 21:18** The Plight of the fig Tree is a sign of the Plight of the Temple (both are barren) The people have not “born fruit that befits repentance.”

Who said that? John the Baptist.

To whom? Pharisees and Sadducees

See Jeremiah 8, especially verses 13 and 20.

**Matthew 21:21** “this mountain”

The place of prayer and worship will no longer be this mountain, this Temple but everywhere there is Faith!

**Matthew 21:23** And when he entered the Temple...

Question: “By what authority...”

Jesus asks them a question first

- Was John the Baptist sent from God?
- If so, why did you not bear fruit that befits repentance?

**Matthew 21:33** Now Jesus tells them where He gets His authority.

The vineyard represents the Temple.

They are not bearing fruit in due season.

Jesus is the Son of the Owner – I am the Son of God