

*is the work of God. If you will remember, the people of Israel saw all these wonderful things that God did to bring them out of Egypt and how did they respond? They were furious with God and wanted to kill Moses and Aaron and return to Egypt, just like these men want to kill Jesus. As Psalm 78 says, "They forgot what he had done, the wonderful things he had shown them... they continued to sin against him." Witnessing miracles has never convinced any human being to abandon a life of sin and to pursue Christ as the treasure of life. The Israelites in the time of Moses had overwhelming miracles performed for them as did the people of Jesus' day and yet the majority of them never believed but continued to rebel. People are not living in unbelief because there is not adequate evidence. People refuse to come to Christ and they construct false religions because that's what they want to do. No amount of miracles will change the mind of a sinner. It takes the healing work of Christ to change a human heart. These religious men are simply responding as their forefathers responded and as every natural human responds to the glory of God.*

**15.** Just so that the religious leaders and we do not miss the point, Jesus quotes a part of Psalm 8:2 to answer the question the religious leaders ask him about the children praising him. Read psalm 8: 1-2. What is the point that Jesus is making with the religious leaders and us?

*Jesus is stating in as plain a language as you can imagine that he is God. His casting out the merchants and his healing the disabled is God setting his glory over the heavens. He is doing the wonderful things that the OT says God does and they are witnessing these things. The children are doing what God has ordained children do, worship him. But they are praising Jesus, thereby showing that Jesus is God. Notice also that God has ordained that children praise him because of his enemies and to silence his foes. Therefore, Jesus is telling these men that because they do not accept him as the Divine Savior and king they are God's enemies. All who refuse to acknowledge Jesus as God who has become man and who has come to heal those broken by sin are God's enemies and will be destroyed by God when Jesus comes again.*

**Your life can be full of hope and joy because Jesus Christ is God's king who is the Creator God.**

*to use God to get what is really loved. The religion that Jesus has come to destroy is the religion that seeks to use God as a cover to justify pursuing what we truly love.*

**10.** Verses 1-11 present Jesus as a “gentle” king who comes to bring “peace”. Yet this doesn’t appear to be a very gentle or peaceable action. What does this apparent contradiction tell us about this gentle, peace bringing Jesus?

*We discover something here about what the Bible means when it uses the term gentle. It doesn’t mean “tolerant” as we use the word. Jesus is not going to tolerate human sin and rebellion. He is opposed to the proud and will not tolerate those who want to use God to justify their own wicked behavior. Jesus came into the world to confront our love for everything except for God and to give us a heart that is in love with God. The best thing that can ever happen to a human being is to be loved by God, that is what we were made for. Your greatest need is not a better job, a better house, a better spouse, a better child, a better self-image. Your greatest need is to know God. That is what Christ has come for. He is opposed and will destroy everyone who seeks to use God to get something else. He is against all who come to the church, not to get God, but to use God to justify themselves and how they want to live.*

**Your life can be full of hope and joy because Jesus Christ is God’s king who confronts and destroys false religion.**

**11.** After throwing out the hypocrites he welcomes the blind and crippled into the temple and heals them. What does this tell us about the mission of Jesus? Compare with Psalm 146, Isaiah 29: 13-21, 32:3-5, 35:1-10, etc.

*What a beautiful picture of the grace of God given in and through Jesus. He throws out those who are seeking to manipulate God and he welcomes all who come to God in their weakness and broken because they need God. When Jesus welcomes these disabled people into the temple and then heals them it is a graphic picture of his central work. Jesus is in the business of making sinners acceptable to God. No sinner can expect to walk into God’s presence and be accepted by God while in their sins. Sins must be forgiven and washed away in order for a human*

*being to enter into God’s holy presence. You cannot heal yourself of your sin anymore than these blind and crippled people could heal themselves. You are completely helpless and must live outside of God’s presence forever unless you come to Jesus to be healed of your sin. So Jesus stands in God’s house of prayer and welcomes all sinners who know they need what Jesus offers and who want to know God.*

**12.** Which category are you in, those making the house of prayer into a den of robbers or those blinded and crippled by sin coming to God through the healing power of Jesus? How do you know?

**Your life can be full of hope and joy because Jesus Christ is God’s king who heals the weak who come to God through him.**

**13.** When the religious leaders see Jesus cleanse the temple, heal the disabled and hear the cries of delighted praise for Jesus from the children, how do they feel and what do they do?

*When the Jewish religious leaders saw Jesus throwing out the merchants and healing the blind and crippled and when they heard the joyful exclamations of the children praising Jesus because of his healing, they were furious. These furious leaders ask Jesus if he can hear the jubilant cries of the children praising him. This is such a stunning picture. Jesus has just put his hands on a blind person who is now able to see and who is jumping up and down holding his children in his arms while they cry out, “Hosanna to the son of David.” The religious leaders stomp up to him and demand to know if he can hear what these children are saying.*

**14.** Matthew uses a word that is only used here in the NT to describe what Jesus is doing and what offended the Jewish leaders. The word is translated “wonderful things” in v. 15 of the NIV. This word is used over 60 times in the Greek translation of the OT, which is the version with which most of Matthew’s audience would be familiar. Read Exodus, 3:14, Psalm 78: 4, 11-18, 29-39. What is Matthew communicating about this situation by using this word?

*So Matthew uses a word that is used throughout the OT to describe the work of God, to show that all that Jesus has done, including the throwing out of the merchants and the healing of the blind and crippled,*

*of the donkey colt in Bethphage. One of the main things this story, indeed the entire Bible is meant to convey is that history is going somewhere. God, in the mystery of his providence, is working right now to accomplish the salvation of all his people. You don't need to be afraid. You can be secure.*

**6.** Why does Matthew use Zechariah 9 rather than a passage like Isaiah 63: 1-6? What does his use of Zechariah tell us about the kind of king Jesus is and the kingdom he is bringing? Compare with the announcement of the angels at his birth in Luke 2:14.

*There are many prophecies describing the coming of God's Savior into the city of Jerusalem in the OT. The one that Jesus chose to emulate is this one from Zechariah where he enters seated on a donkey's colt. It is the prophecy where he is called gentle. He is not mounted on a warhorse. An army does not surround him. He does not come dressed in royal robes and in gold gilded chariots. He does not come with coercive power but in humility. As he told his disciples he isn't coming to be crowned king but to be crucified as Savior. He comes as the emissary of peace. He comes to bring peace between God and man and between man and man. That is exactly what v. 10 of Zechariah 9 says, "He will proclaim peace to the nations." His riding on the colt of a donkey upon the cloaks of poor peasant people is a sign of the kind of kingdom he is bringing. He is not creating a kingdom like the kingdoms of this world. He did not come to bring his people earthly wealth, health and power. He has come to reconcile men to God and to one another.*

**7.** What does the joy of the crowd combined with the command in Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice O Daughter of Zion!" tell us about how we should respond to the coming of Jesus?

*Joy is the fitting response of every believer to the coming of King Jesus. These crowds are giving us a portrait of that joy. Peter says in his letter, "Though you have not seen him, you love him and though you do not see him now you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls." What makes a Christian a Christian is delight in Jesus Christ, amazement that he has come to rescue a sinner like me from my sin. We know in better ways than the disciples and these*

*crowds that the coming of Jesus into the world, to the city of Jerusalem was for the purpose of making peace between us and God. When a person has understood and embraced this king who comes seated on a donkey's colt, they can live in peace and joy.*

**Your life can be full of hope and joy because Jesus Christ is God's king who has come to establish God's kingdom of peace.**

**8.** What is the first thing that Jesus does when he enters the city of Jerusalem?

*He enters the temple and tips over the tables and chairs of those who are selling animals and changing money in the temple. These merchants are present by an arrangement with the Jewish religious leaders. They are selling animals to the people who have come to Jerusalem for Passover to offer as the Law commands. They are changing money so the people can pay their half shekel tax to the temple as the Law commands.*

**9.** He quotes two passages while he "cleans" the temple, Isaiah 56:6-8 and Jeremiah 7: 1-11. According to these passages what is the reason Jesus is giving for his actions?

*The temple is to be the place where God and man meet. God repeatedly said that he has placed his name upon the temple in Jerusalem and that he dwells there among his people. It is the physical symbol of the presence of God with his people and when people come there, they are to do so as if they are coming to meet God. It is a house of prayer, of communication with God. Jesus, by quoting Isaiah is showing that the center of OT religion is God. The point of the whole thing is to meet God. The presence of these merchants in the house of God is proof positive that the religious leaders and the people were not in the temple to meet God.*

*When he says they have turned the temple into a den of robbers he is referring to what the prophet Jeremiah said. The people in Jeremiah's day and the people in Jesus' day were using God to get what they really love. Their indifference to the purpose of the temple shows their indifference to God. All false religion, whether under the guise of Christianity or any of the other counterfeit religions in the world, seeks*

# THE TRIUMPH OF GOD COMES THROUGH KING JESUS Matthew 21: 1-17

*Please review this week's catechism.*

Did you meet anyone new this past Sunday after the worship service?

## INTRODUCTION

Describe the last time you looked forward to something. Why did you look forward to it? What effect did looking forward to this event have upon you prior to the event?

What you have just described is faith and hope at work. You believed that something was going to happen and you believed it would make you happy. Therefore, you looked forward to it with confident expectation and this hope produced in you, joy. In a nutshell, this is how the Christian life is supposed to work. God has promised us in Christ a glorious future. We believe that promise (faith) and look forward to its fulfillment (hope) and so are filled with joy in the present.

Our joy is so miniscule most of the time because we do not trust the promises of God but the promises of some created thing and so our hope is either completely groundless or ultimately unsatisfying because it is not permanent. In Matthew 21 we are given a multitude of reasons for why we can be full of hope and joy. The ultimate point of this passage is showing that Jesus is God's king who has come to fulfill all God's promises. In this passage we will see at least four ways that Jesus, as God's king is working out God's salvation so that we can be full of hope and joy now.

## STUDY

1. Describe in your own words the scene that Matthew "paints" in vv. 1-11. Compare Matthew 20: 29-34 & John 12: 12-19 to get some of the other reasons for the excitement.

2. According to vv. 4-5 why does Jesus ride upon the donkey's colt? Read Isaiah 62: 8-12 & Zechariah 9: 9-11 as Matthew is quoting a portion of both these passages.

*Jesus is fulfilling what the prophets Isaiah and Zechariah said would happen some 500 years prior to this event. One of the signs that God's king and Savior has come is that he would enter Jerusalem upon a donkey's colt to the praises of God's people.*

3. What can we conclude about the crowd's view of Jesus based upon what they did and said? See 2 Samuel 7:12-16 & Psalm 118: 19-29 (Hosanna is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew for "Save us" which you can see in Psalm 118:25. It came to be used either as a prayer or as a declaration of God's saving work and thus as a word of praise. See NIV footnote.).

*These massive crowds of people acknowledge that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah. He is the Savior who was first promised in Genesis 3:15. He is the descendant of David who will reign over God's people forever. He is the "blessed one", the cornerstone which the builders rejected. He is the Lord to whom thanks is due.*

4. The crowds in the city ask for an explanation for the commotion. They want to know who is this that has caused such a stir. The crowds entering the city with Jesus say, "This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee." Compare this answer with Deut. 18:18. Again, what is being claimed about Jesus?

*He is the prophet, just like Moses, that God promised he would send to his people.*

5. In these 11 verses there are at least five specific OT passages quoted and then words that appear in literally hundreds of other OT passages. What is it that Jesus and Matthew want to make sure that we know?

*Jesus is the long awaited king and savior. All of the OT promises are fulfilled in him and will be fulfilled by him. Matthew also wants us to understand how completely in control God is of the world. There are literally millions of details that had to be arranged in order for this event to take place in this fashion, not the least of which is the presence*