



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Suffering Savior, Mark 11:1-11, Zechariah 9:9, Psalm 118:25-26

"The Triumphal Entry: The King Comes for His Kingdom" TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are beginning a series of studies tonight which are entitled, "The Suffering Savior, The Old Testament and the Doctrine of the Atonement," and in case some of you, many of you, I see here do not understand the character of these theological studies, I want to outline, in general, what we want to do. And that will give you, I think, a little better idea of what the plan and program is.

What we are undertaking is a series of studies that are primarily theological in character. That is, they are not concerned primarily with the exposition of the Scriptures, such as one would undertake in a systematic or continuous exposition of a particular portion of the word. But they are primarily of a theological character. We are interested in some of the great principles of the word of God as they are set forth in specific texts, and we want to stress in this series, particularly, our Lord's ministry in fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies concerning the suffering servant of the Lord.

Now you have read the Bible enough to know that these sections of the Old Testament in the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 42, chapter 49, chapter 50, chapter 52 and 53, are great sections which set forth, in the Old Testament, that Jesus Christ is going to have, of course he is not known as Jesus Christ in the prophecy of Isaiah, except only incidentally, hidden perhaps. We now know the Messiah to be Jesus of Nazareth. Well

we are interested in seeing how he fulfills this program for him set forth in the word of God as the suffering servant of Jehovah. We are also interested in our Lord and Mark's use of the Old Testament. That is, we are interested in discovering exactly how the New Testament authors, probably taught by our Lord, read and understood their Bible. Their Bible was the Old Testament. So we are interested in learning from them some of the great principles to help us understand the Bible as we read it.

In fact, I think if we could really come to the place where we understand exactly how the New Testament writers used the Old Testament. Then the whole Bible for us would become a new kind of book. So I want to stress this. Now this is not an easy kind of study, so you will have to have patience, and you will have to apply yourself a little bit to the reading of the word. If you are thinking by these studies that I am going to give you a series of sermons, I want to disabuse your mind of that right at the present moment because that is not the purpose. I am not here to inspire you particularly. I am not here to exhort you in such a way so that you go out exhorted and encouraged and inspired -- did I say that, inspired? That's not the primary purpose. What I am interested in doing is trying to lead you into a deeper knowledge of the word of God, and I think the resultant will be this, but it may not necessarily come each night as we study the Scriptures.

Now, there is one other thing that we want to stress, and I want to lay a great deal of stress upon this, and that is the theology of the atonement. And so throughout the series, at appropriate points, we want to stop for a moment and look at some of the things that we are reading as they relate to the doctrine of the atonement. And I will try to explain what I mean by that because it's important that you understand the terms that I use when speaking of theological doctrines, otherwise you would not understand me. So I'll try to give you a little glossary as we go along. But this is perhaps the central doctrine of the whole of the Bible, the theology of the atonement. This is one of the things that we want to stress as we go along.

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Now, the biblical text for the class is going to be the last few chapters of the Gospel of Mark. In other words, we are going to use this section that has to do with the passion account of our Lord Jesus Christ as a kind of text book for what we are going to study. The aim is to provide a means for an in depth study of the word, and in line with this I expect you, as the members of the class, will do some reading.

By the way, I have prepared three sheets. One in which I express something of what I'm saying to you now and suggest some titles for reading, some of which you may obtain through the Chapel, through Mr. Prier, I understand, and others which you may want to obtain on your own. I also have a list of all of the titles with Scripture references and references to Old Testament passages that we will be considering. And I hope as we come to these particular topics, you will not only read the New Testament section before you come, but you will also read the Old Testament passage, and the context of that passage in the Old Testament. Some of the titles do not have Scripture references attached to them. That does not mean that they are not studies of the Bible necessarily, although one or two are not strictly speaking studies in the Bible, rather studies in the history in the interpretation of the Bible.

But in some cases, it was just impossible to locate in one text what I would say in the lecture, and so I left off some Scripture references, but that does not mean that I will not give you an assignment or suggest some passages for you. I do not intend to give you any examinations or quizzes, so you can relax a little so far as that is concerned. If you would like to have an exam or quiz, and some of you would like to do a little more studying, well that would be very interesting to me, and I would like it very much. If you could get together and come to see me, we will arrange something so that you can do some more digging on your own.

Well this is essentially, what we're going to do, "The Suffering Savior, The Old Testament and the Doctrine of the Atonement." When I was in the University of Edinburgh a few weeks ago, I came across an interesting citation, and I'm going to read it

to you, "Which of us goes home to occupy himself in a Christian manner after church? Who takes the pains to read the books and applies himself to discover the sense of holy Scripture? No one will dare to say he does his best. We find rich furniture in the houses of church people, but we find no where good books, or at least among few. And those who have such books are as if they had them not, keeping them always shut up.

Which of you who hears me now would be able to say by heart a Psalm, or some other part of Scripture if I were to ask this of him?" That's the end of the citation. It's an interesting citation because I think it's the kind of citation that might well be from some modern day preacher who preached in the twentieth century who was trying to draw a contrast between the materialism of the twentieth century and what really should be our primary interest, if we are Christians, the word of God. The interesting thing to me, in connection with this, was that this was a citation from John Chrysostom who preached in the fourth century, and so the same things that moved the earliest of the believers are things that are contemporary for us today.

Well those are just a few words of introduction so far as our series as a whole is concerned. Tonight we're going to begin with a kind of introductory study in the triumphal entry of our Lord. The title is, "The Triumphal Entry: The King Comes for His Kingdom." And first of all, I want to say a few words by way of introduction.

Now each of the nights, I will try to give you an outline of the particular message that I will be giving, and this is the outline of the one that I will be giving tonight. I did not have any materials at home, and so I constructed the outline, not constructed the outline, but put it on one of our transparencies here. Some of the others will have a little bit more information on them. But first of all tonight, as we study, "The Triumphal Entry: The King Comes for His Kingdom," it is not without design that two of the most significant figures in history should appear on the human plane in the same generation, at the same time. One of these men was the mighty imperial ruler, Augustus, called the divine Caesar, as later Gaelic inscriptions have it.

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Augustine was a man who attempted to bring in the golden age, but was unable to do so. One of the great commentators has said concerning him, "That *homo imperiosus*," that is, this imperial man, "could bind the dragon but he could not slay it. The second man who lived at the same time in the troubled little land of Israel, where even the mighty Caesar was never able to bring complete peace, was the man of peace, or the Prince of Peace as Isaiah put it. Having overcome the temptation by which Caesar Augustus failed, he trod the path of the cross firmly and fearlessly, and finally, hanging upon the cross, established the basis for the kingdom that was to come." Virgil had said prophetically, not realizing, what he was saying, many, many years before that, "The turning of the ages would come." And it came with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Calvary, in a sense, is the hinge of history because all of human history ranges itself around the cross of the Lord Jesus, but before Calvary comes, as we read the New Testament, Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday was a day of wild rapture of enthusiasm and the delirium of an eager welcome of a prophet who was coming to the city of Jerusalem at a climatic time, but as we read the accounts in the Gospels, it becomes evident that there was little genuine spirituality in the desire of the crowd to understand who was this person that was coming. To most the triumphal entry was not triumphal at all. Nevertheless it was eventful in the world of the spirit.

G.K. Chesterton has written a poem called, "The Donkey," which has forcefully caught something of the hidden importance of the event of the triumphal entry, and I'm going to read it. "When fishes flew and forests walked, And figs grew upon thorn, Some moment when the moon was blood / Then surely I was born; With monstrous head and sickening cry, And ears like errant wings, The devil's walking parody, On all four-footed things. The tattered outlaw of the earth, Of ancient crooked will; Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb, I keep my secret still. Fools! For I also had my hour; One far fierce hour and sweet: There was a shout about my ears, And palms before my feet." That, I think,

catches something of the fact that, while the people of Jerusalem did not understand what was really happening, there was something significant that was happening.

And perhaps these last few words express plainly the fact that in the events of our Lord's life, there are certain fundamental and eternal things that are happening which have tremendous significance. Some have said that the triumphal entry was a bid on the part of our Lord Jesus for popular sympathy. This was expressed by Nietzsche, who said, "Jesus Christ was a weary forlorn Jew who, in doubt, despairingly died as his last attempt to win the favor of the nation failed." But when you read the accounts of the New Testament, I think, any earnest student of the Scriptures will come to the conviction that what Jesus Christ did, on the day of his triumphal entry or the day of his untriumphal entry, if you would like to call it that, what he did on that day was to fulfill an event that had Messianic significance. It was really our Lord's declaration of himself and all the details of it unite and proclaim loudly, "Behold your King!"

Now, let's take our New Testaments and turn to Mark chapter 11, and I want to read beginning at verse 1 through verse 11. Mark 11 verse 1 through verse 11,

"And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage (that is the pronounciation of the Greek text) and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. (Mark chapter 11 and verse 3) And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? Say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, what do ye, loosing the colt? And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. And many spread their garments in the way: and

others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve."

Now we come to the preparation for the triumphal entry, according to the outline, and the commandment of the arrangements. Our Lord, before the triumphal entry, had spent the night in Bethany. Bethany was a friendly place to our Lord. When you read the New Testament accounts, you discover that whenever Jesus Christ was in Bethany, he had a warm reception. It was one of the places that was friendly to him. There he had spent the night. And now with his Galilean followers, he makes his way toward the city of Jerusalem from Bethany and consequently, his feet must pass over the Mount of Olives.

And all of this is also of prophetic significance for the Mount of Olives is the Mount that has Messianic significance. It is, you know, on the Mount of Olives that our Lord Jesus Christ's feet shall stand at his Second Advent when he comes to establish his Kingdom. And so, it is appropriate, as he comes into the city of Jerusalem for his last visit there before his death that he should come from the east and pass over the Mount of Olives. From this Mount, he will come to offer Israel this kingdom that the Old Testament had prophesied and, at the same time, offer to deliver them. As our Lord draws near the Mount, he calls two of his disciples and asks them to procure two animals for the procession. Mark mentions only one. Matthew mentions two. As a result of this, many have said, what we have is a simple contradiction. It is impossible for us to believe in the inerrant word of God because why should Matthew say two and Mark one.

Now it is not an easy problem to solve, and I do not want to suggest, by the flippant way in which I refer to it, that it is a simple problem. One of the things that we

evangelicals have to remember is that we do not really have so much information about the Bible that everybody else who studies it are just ignoramuses in comparison with what we know. It is a difficult problem, but probably is to be understood in this way: Our Lord arrives upon a little colt that had never been ridden, and consequently, in order to ride peacefully, it was necessary for the mother of this animal to be procured in order that the mother may proceed along side and comfort the colt in such a way that our Lord would be able to ride that new colt into the city. Even some of our evangelicals have said that what we have, really, is Matthew misunderstanding the Old Testament. The Old Testament really said there was only one, but Matthew said two. I think this satisfactorily explains the difficulty that there were two, and yet our Lord rode upon one of them because this was customary, and it is also in accordance with the culture of the time.

Now, Mark does make a comment that, I think, is somewhat significant. Jesus says I want you to go over "into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat." Now, Luke also mentions this. Matthew does not. The reason for this is probably that this draws a little emphasis because it is customary in the time of the apostles for objects that were devoted to the service of the king to be such as had never been used, and so the fact that this animal had never been ridden was an indication of the fact that it was appropriate for the entry of a king into the city.

Now I want you, at this point, to turn with me over to Matthew chapter 21. This is the parallel passage, and here we read of the attestation of this. Matthew, alone, records it. He says in verse 4 of chapter 21, "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." Now notice carefully what Matthew is saying. He is saying the fact that Jesus Christ obtained the two animals and rode upon one of them, the other trailing along by the side of it and



made his entry into the city of Jerusalem upon the animal is testimony of the fact that the Scripture is fulfilled.

Our modern contemporary scholars say all this is an example of prophecy creating the tradition. In other words, this really didn't happen this way. We are not to think that it happened this way, but rather, the New Testament writers say that it happened this way because the Old Testament said it would happen that way, and therefore, they write the New Testament in order to agree with what the tradition said would have to happen. That is, in accordance with the prophecy of the Old Testament, so that the prophecy creates the tradition which the New Testament writers have now given us in what we call the New Testament. It was the church that manufactured this story.

Now, I want you to turn with me back to the Old Testament to the Book of Zechariah. I might say in connection with that criticism, that if it were really true that the church was creating this story in order to fulfill the prophecy of the Old Testament, which they knew was in the Old Testament, although they themselves did not have any idea that Jesus had ridden upon the animal.

In other words, if somebody was trying to fulfill Old Testament prophecy by drawing up this story, they surely would not draw it up in a manner that apparently contradicts itself. In other words, that Matthew and Mark and Luke were drawing up accounts in order fulfill the Old Testament, not knowing at all what happened when our Lord was here, they surely would all agree that there was one animal or that there were just two animals. They wouldn't give us something that on the surface appears to be contradictory. The fact that they've given us something on the surface that appears contradictory is evidence of the fact that they weren't trying to write something to agree with the Old Testament, but they were actually telling us historical fact.

That's the reason why, for example, when we read in the Epistle of 2 Peter, an epistle that contemporary scholars debate a great deal because many of our modern scholars, most of them, some of them evangelical, say Peter could not have written 2

Peter. The interesting thing is that the introductions of those epistles are different. And so if we say, as modern scholarship does, that whoever wrote 2 Peter was trying to parade under the name of the author of the first epistle, the apostle. Well if he were trying to do that he would surely not begin it, "Simon Peter," as over against the beginning of the first epistle. If I were trying to write a third epistle of Peter, I would write it exactly like the others. I would begin in the same way. I wouldn't write it in a different way. So all of these little differences which sometimes disturb evangelicals are really the things to help us to know that what we read in the New Testament is an authentic record. It has the natural apparent contradictions which, on deeper study, turn out to be marvelous harmonies within.

Now, have you found Zechariah? I thought perhaps I would declare a little intermission, and we would have a cup of tea, so that you could find one of the minor prophets. If you have now found Zechariah chapter 9 and verse 9, I want you to read with me now. You follow along as I read chapter 9 verse 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 a colt the foal of an ass." You'll notice there is only one animal in the prophecy of Zechariah.

Now, I'm going to read on a verse or two so you'll get the context of this passage, for we want to say something about it in just a moment, "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the nation: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." Now, notice what Zechariah is saying is that this Messianic figure is to come in the future, and he is to come as the king. He is to come as just. He is to have salvation. He is come lowly, riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass. And he is going to speak peace to the nations. That is, he is going to establish a peace over the face of the earth. And his kingdom, his dominion, is going to be from sea to sea and from the river, even to the ends of the earth. Now, Zechariah has said that

this, in our Lord's triumphal entry, this prophecy is fulfilled. All this has come to pass that it might be fulfilled, and then he cites Zechariah chapter 9 verse 9.

Well, now let's move on to capital "C" in our outline, "The arrangements completed." The arrangements were completed, the clause in verse 4, 5 and 6, these clauses suggesting that our Lord had super natural knowledge of what would happen. Now as we come to consider what was really happening here in the completion of these arrangements and our Lord seating himself upon the foal of an ass, we must never forget that while our Lord Jesus was coming as a king, he was also coming as a suffering king. This was the thing that Israel failed to understand. They, of course, knew from the reading of Old Testament passages that there was coming a Messianic figure who would rein from the city of Jerusalem, establishing a kingdom that would reach to the four corners of the earth. But the thing that they did not realize, and the thing that we're going to see in a moment, is illustrated in this very passage here. The thing that they did not realize is that this king that is to come is to establish his kingdom by virtue of bloodshed upon a cross in Jerusalem.

Now there are two types of errors that we can make in interpreting the New Testament. We can talk about the way Jesus Christ has come to bring a kingdom. All premillennialists speak about how Jesus Christ has come, and he is going to establish his kingdom. Many of them say that Jesus Christ came in his first coming to establish a kingdom. But when Israel did not receive the kingdom, then he found it necessary to go to the cross. This is usually the way in which it is presented. That is false.

On the other hand, there are those who say Jesus Christ did not come to establish a kingdom upon the earth. What he did come to do was to die upon the cross, and in dying upon the cross, he made it possible for men to believe in him. And those who believe in him form the church or the Kingdom of God, and it, this spiritual kingdom, is in existence right now. So in the one case, Jesus came to present a kingdom, but when Israel refused, then he turned to the cross. And the other, no, he didn't come to present a

kingdom, an earthly kingdom, he came to die upon a cross, and as a result of that a spiritual kingdom has been established.

Now both of these emphases, in my humble opinion, are wrong. Now perhaps my opinion is not so humble [laughter], nevertheless, I do think that they are both wrong, and I think that you will agree with me when we finish our studies because it seems extremely clear from the study of the New Testament that our Lord Jesus came to present a kingdom by means of a cross. In other words, it was in his mind all along to die upon the cross at Calvary. It was in his mind because there can be no kingdom apart from his cross, and there can be no offer of a kingdom that does not presuppose that he will die upon the cross at Calvary. For no man can become a citizen of the Kingdom of God who has not within his own heart known the experience of regeneration, of new life, because otherwise he's not qualified to live in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. So consequently, the New Testament sets forth quite plainly that our Lord Jesus came as a king, but he came as a suffering king.

That's necessary because of the evils that exist in the human heart and also in human society. We need to remember that there are at least four evils from which we have to have release. There is first of all the evil of suffering. This is the philosophical riddle of life. "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble," Job said. And philosophers who wrestle with the problem of evil, and it is a deep and serious problem, philosophers are wrestling with a problem that arises as a result of human sin, one of the evils, suffering.

There is also the evil of error, or ignorance. It was Plato's belief that man, if he could just know, would be able to please God. The real problem was ignorance. If we could have knowledge of truth, then we should live in a way that would honor deity. For knowledge is the key to our problem, hence ignorance is the source of evil. Socrates' "Know Thyself" expresses the prescription of Plato and other Platonic philosophers for salvation.

The third evil is the evil of sin. Sin, which is rooted in unbelief; the basic character of sin is unbelief. Sin is not rebellion. Rebellion arises out of unbelief. Sin is basically unbelief which expresses itself in rebellion against God and pride and self seeking among men. It estranges a man from God. It estranges a man from other men. It is unbelief. It is the basic disharmony between a man's true self and his fallen self. Men may speak of it as the moribund word, sin, as John MacQuarrie, Oxford theologian has not too long ago spoken of it, or as inauthentic existence, or as estrangement. But sin is a biblical term and sin is a human term and all other evils are really derivative from it. There is no need for us to dodge the question of sin. Sin exists. "S I N," and that unbelief is basic to the human need.

And fourth, death, the threat of cessation of life; Martin Heidegger has spoken of man as the animal that knows he must die. Modern man thinks it's morbid to speak of death. But I think it's morbid not to speak about death, for all of us face death sooner or later, some sooner, some later. To find release, we need atonement. Now religions differ particularly in their prescriptions for therapy for these four evils, the evil of suffering, the evil of error, the evil of sin, the evil of death and all of them divide themselves over the prescriptions for therapy. On one side are all systems of thought except Christianity. And all of these systems know no divine welcome to the sinner until he has ceased to be a sinner. Every one of them requires that he cease to be a sinner in order to find welcome from the deity. Christianity is the only system of truth, on the other hand, that offers a welcome and a just welcome to the man who is a sinner and offers him a welcome in his sin. It is the only system of truth. It is the only philosophy, for it is a philosophy. It is the only philosophy that offers that kind of relief for man.

Now, it's one of the purposes of these studies to discover and elucidate the Markan theory of the atonement. And we are going to see, I hope, how it is possible for God to welcome a sinner, and welcome him as a sinner. One of the problems of the doctrine of the atonement is this, the conference at Chalcedon, the great council which

settled the question of the person of Jesus Christ for the Christian church, that council settled a significant question concerning the Lord Jesus and as a result of that, all discussions concerning the person of Jesus Christ ultimately go back to the Council of Chalcedon. And so we are very grateful for the fact that the early church studied the doctrine of the person of Christ, and at that council reached a decision that commanded universal assent. And at that particular council, the universal assent that was commanded was that Jesus Christ was truly God and truly man, that he was a divine person who possessed a divine nature and a human nature, and that these natures were united in that one person.

Now in the case of the atonement of Jesus Christ, there never has been a council in which the work of Jesus Christ has been discussed and in which the whole church has come to a general agreement concerning the thing that which happened when Jesus Christ suffered on the cross for us. In other words, there is no council like Chalcedon which settles the question of the work of Jesus Christ. So what we are forced to do, then is to, through the study of the Scriptures, discover and elucidate the theory of the atonement that the Holy Spirit has.

Now this is a very great problem. So this is what we are seeking to do. We are seeking to shed the theories that are not true to the New Testament, those that do not tell us exactly how and why and for what reason and for whom Jesus Christ died, and arrive at the theory that is set forth in the word of God. So we are looking for the theory of the atonement that explains the truth of the New Testament.

Now we must remember this too, it is not the doctrine of the atonement that saves us. It is the atonement that saves us. But you cannot have any atonement if you do not have some theory of the atonement. If you eliminated all of the things that scholars and theologians and Bible teachers have said about the death of Christ, eliminated them all and just say, "Well in my theory, Christ died for my sins." What you're saying, you think, is only the fact that Jesus Christ died, but in that fact, you already have a theory of the

atonement. It is your theory of the atonement. And I am sure if I should ask you a second question, "Well what do you mean by Christ died for my sins?" You would say, "Well, I mean he took my place." Probably, if you're evangelical, you've grown up in that tradition. You would say, "Yes, he took my place." Ah, that's your theory then.

Now the question we want to try to answer is, "What is the biblical theory of the atonement of Christ and what are its ramifications?" Now, as you have guessed, and as I have seen that you have guessed because you've been looking up at that outline saying, "Where in the world is this on that outline?" That was a diversion. [Laughter]

Now we're coming to moment two, the journey to Jerusalem verses 7 through 10 and capital "A" in the procession. As the crowd inched its way along the road from Jericho to the city of the great king, thoughts of Jerusalem's visitation moved our Lord to deep agitation and an agitation that would soon break into sobs of lamentation. Just before he broke into the sobs of lamentation, however, those who were following with him, the Galileans, those that were friends of his, who had now been joined by the apostles who had brought the animals upon which our Lord was riding, the crowd breaks out into praise and rejoicing in loud voices for, as Luke says, "all the mighty works they had seen."

Now I want you to notice what is going on in the minds of these friends of our Lord, for they are friends of our Lord. They are his disciples. They are his Galilean followers, which were with him as he was making his way to Jerusalem. They loved our Lord. They had a basic attachment to him. And the things for which they expressed great praise to God are the mighty works that they had seen. You do not see them saying anything about praise to God for the mighty redemption which he had accomplished in their personal lives. For the great stress of their thought is upon the fact that this man to whom we are attached to for some reason has this unspeakable appeal to us. This man is the king who is to deliver Israel. He is a mighty prophet from God, a mighty king, the Messiah who has preformed the miracles that attest his Messianic glory. But there is

missing in it the element of personal devotion because of him because of their redemption. I want you to notice it because it is important.

Now as they reached the top of the Mount of Olives and our Lord looks down over the city, he himself breaks out into weeping over the city. And the verb that is used is a very interesting verb. It is found in Luke chapter 19 and verse 41, "He wept over the city." And it is a verb that means to weep audibly. I think the crowd around our Lord must have been surprised at what they saw as they heard him sobbing with tears of lamentation as he looked down over the southeastern part of the city and particularly to the place of the temple. When he stood at Lazarus' tomb, the text of the Bible says, "Jesus wept," but there the word is simply to shed tears. This is something much stronger. It is the sob of weeping which is audible. And our Lord weeps over the city saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace," do you remember that he would come and speak peace to the nations from Zechariah. Now all of this is designed to create the impression that our Lord Jesus is consciously fulfilling that prophecy of Zechariah.

"This thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes." Capital B, the acclamation. Now they have broken into praise for our Lord, and they have used words that refer back to Psalm 118. Just for a moment, let me just recall that Psalm. It is one of the great Psalms and we will look at it in more detail later on. It's one that one commentator has called, "a string of pearls," because in it is a remarkable series of texts, one after the other, which seem to be independent, much like Proverbs. Now this Psalm, Psalm 118, which contains the expression, "The mighty works of God," and which also contain the expression, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." This Psalm, Psalm 118, was sung at the Feast of the Tabernacles and the Feast of the Passover.

Now I wish I were able to ask you a question every now and then and perhaps in the future as we get to know each other a little better, you me and I you, I will stop and ask you a question. But if I were to ask you a question and you were on your toes and



would respond, I would like to ask you, "Well now this Psalm which was sung at the Feast of the Tabernacles and the Feast of the Passover creates a question in my mind and the question is simply this. Since the feasts of the Old Testament are designed to portray prophetic events of the future, we know for example that the Passover Feast is designed to represent the suffering of our Lord Jesus upon the cross at Calvary, what does the Feast of Tabernacles signify?"

And you should reply, "Oh well Dr. Johnson, that signifies the Messianic Kingdom for at the Feast of Tabernacles the Israelites came up to the city of Jerusalem and there they dwelt in booths. All of this was designed to portray figuratively what would happen in the Messianic Kingdom when the Messiah would come and establish his kingdom beginning from Jerusalem." So Israel carried out the Feast of the Tabernacles with the liturgy each year. They did not realize all that it meant, but they did recognize that it signified there was coming time when God would finally deliver Israel from bondage to the nations and establish them as the head of the nations upon the earth. So they observed the Feast of Tabernacles. And at the Feast of Tabernacles they recited at particular points in it the liturgy of Psalm 118.

So the fact that as our Lord reaches the city of Jerusalem or looks out over the city of Jerusalem. The crowd cries out saying in verse 9, "Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." Is an evidence of the fact that they were singing expressions that were ordinarily sung at the Feast of Tabernacles which was typical of the kingdom of our Lord upon the earth. So in other words again in the unfolding of this event we have reference to our kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the fact that these things relate to the kingdom is evident from the expression in verse 10, "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David," furthermore in verse 9 we read, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." And, "he that cometh" was a well known Messianic title. That by the way is why in the New Testament we read in the

Book of Revelation about he who was who is and who is to come. That expression, "is to come," is a Messianic title for our Lord. And here it is in Mark chapter 11 verse 9, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." That means essentially blessed is the Messiah. All of this is designed to create the impression that the triumphal entry is the official presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ as the King of Israel to Israel.

Now then, I want to sum up what I've been trying to say here concerning the entry because in the expression, "Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," we have the climax of the triumphal entry. "Hosanna" is an expression that means essentially, "save, we pray," or perhaps even, "save us," but "save, we pray," most likely. So what we have here in the cry of the people that went before and those that followed is an appeal for heavenly enablement in the establishment of the kingdom. "Hosanna," save, we pray, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Now what is the total evidence for the Messianic import of this incident? Let me just detail some of the things that we've been talking about. Number one, the association of the palms which were waived before our Lord with the Feast of Tabernacles was one of the signs that what is being fulfilled here is the presentation of our Lord as King to the city. And so the very fact that they took palm branches and waved them before our Lord which was characteristic of the Feast of Tabernacles is an evidence of the fact that what we have is something that pertains to the kingdom. Second, the Messianic reference, "He that cometh," that is an evidence of recognition of the fact that our Lord is the Messianic king. Third, we read that the crowd says, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," and in verse 10, "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord." Or as Luke says, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord the King." Fourth, the time was right.

Daniel, in the great prophecy of Daniel chapter 9, which Sir Edward Denny called, "The backbone of prophecy," said that sixty nine weeks of years lay between the going forth of the commandment to build Jerusalem and to the Messiah the prince. Now that

sixty nine weeks of years is being fulfilled at the present time. If you were to go back to Daniel, discover through the study of prophesy, the time when the commandment went forth to build Jerusalem, count sixty nine weeks of years, that Israel sixty nine times seven, take those years subtract them from the time that the commandment went for to rebuild Jerusalem, you would discover that this is the time of the presentation of our Lord to Israel as their King.

In other words, if you had been a student of the Old Testament prophesy, you could have said today is the day that the Messiah is to come as king. We have a lot of guesses among prophetic students today as to the time in which we are living. Some of the date setting that is taking place. It will be, in my opinion, very unfortunate for evangelical Christianity because any date setting is contrary to the word of God. There is no place in the Bible so far as I can tell that gives us any reason for saying that we believe that Jesus Christ is coming tomorrow, or one year from now, or three years from now. Or he will be here within five years. There is nothing in the Bible that suggests that. So far as our Lord's coming, it is indefinite.

Now you may say, "I think." But do not say, "I think in the Spirit," which creates the impression that you're saying that this is what the Bible teaches. There is a great deal of difference between what the Bible teaches and what you may think or what I may think. But Israel, in the first coming of our Lord Jesus, was in a different situation. For she had the prophecy of Daniel, and in the prophecy of Daniel there were certain years that were set forth, and if they had studied the Scriptures, those who had studied the Scriptures would have known that the consolation of Israel was drawing nigh because there were dates that were pointers to the first coming of our Lord Jesus. And so if they had been students of the word, they would have known.

Fifth, our Lord's actions indicate that he intentionally fulfilled Zechariah chapter 9 verse 9. The triumphal entry was undoubtedly a piece of prophetic Messianic symbolism on our Lord's part. That's why he said to the disciples at this precise time, "I want you to

go over into the city of Jerusalem and I want you to ask for animals, a colt the foal of an ass upon which I may ride into the city.

And furthermore, these are the things that are going to be true of your encounter with those who have the animal." He supernaturally let them know that they would be able to obtain the animal. He was trying to convey the impression not only to them, but to the city of Jerusalem that he was fulfilling the ancient prophecy of Zechariah chapter 9 verse 9 which says, "Behold, your King cometh to you." So our Lord's actions in carrying out this piece of Messianic symbolism indicate that he regarded himself as the King who was presenting himself as Israel's King. Furthermore, sixthly, Matthew's comments in chapter 21, which we have looked at especially his use of the perfect tense, "This was done," shows that he believed that Jesus was fulfilling prophecy when he came into the city of Jerusalem at his triumphal entry.

And finally, as we're going to see next week and the weeks that follow, in chapter 12 of the Book of Mark, there is parabolic teaching in this chapter which assumes that the kingdom has been presented and has now been rejected by the nation. For example, we read in chapter 12 and verse 9, "What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others." And so our Lord tells parables from the standpoint of the rejection of the king.

Finally, the arrival in Jerusalem, and capital "E," "The Action of the King," Mark tells us in verse 11, "And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple." Why did he go to the temple? Well this too was for Messianic reasons. It was there, of course, that he should be received by the nation as the king who now comes as the priest king to establish himself in the temple. But in the facts of the account, our Lord went into the temple, surveys all things, according to the different accounts and then returns to Bethany with the twelve for the night.

Capital "B," "The Reaction of the Populace," and one, Interrogation, the city stirred by what has happened, according to Matthew in chapter 21, asks a kind of rhetorical

question, "Who is this?" This agitated crowd in the city is the same agitated crowd that will say soon, "Crucify him." But now the crowd of the city says, as this crowd of our Lord's followers come into the city, "Who is this?" And if verse 11 of Matthew chapter 21, we have the answer, "And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

Now, that explanation is about as anticlimactic as is possible. I think I can remember when I use to read the Bible and think that wasn't so anticlimactic. But that was because my understanding of the Bible was not so great. That seems a very interesting thing. As a matter of fact, it seems to be a thing that accords our Lord some degree of honor and fame. "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." Well he was a prophet wasn't he? Yes but he was more than a prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. You might say of Jeane Dixon, "Well who is this?" Well this is the prophet of Washington of the District of Columbia, or wherever Jeane Dixon may live. But you would not be saying anything about her Messianic claims.

And so when this multitude says, "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee," why, this is not according our Lord the kind of praise and honor that belongs to him. What they should have replied when they said among themselves, "Who is this?" is, "This is Israel, great King, Messiah, the prophet that was likened to Moses but who is the real prophet, the priest who fulfills all of the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the King who will reign upon the earth, the one who is to accomplish our so great salvation. He is thy Lord, worship thou him." This is the kind of response that should have come. "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

Now, that is the answer that emotional enthusiasm may give, but it is not the answer of earnest faith. Our Lord was silent. His face was wet with tears. He sadly retraced his steps to Bethany. The die was cast. It is evident that our Lord must do the work of the servant in passion and blood before he sits in regal splendor as sovereign.

"The Triumphal Entry: The King Comes for his Kingdom" by S. Lewis Johnson  
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But this he has known by virtue of his divine omniscience and also his divine determination from eternity past.

This is, I think, an incident that illustrates for us the fact that it is possible to be very enthused about Jesus of Nazareth, but not to really know a great deal about him. As a matter of fact, even his own followers, while enthusiastic and while expressing praise and thanksgiving for the mighty works that he did were really almost guilty of blasphemy. For what they were doing was praising one side of our Lord's ministry and neglecting the other most important side. As a matter of fact, the crowd which says, "Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**