

# The Presentment of King Jesus

Matthew 21:1-11

*Halifax: 6 August 2006*

## **Introduction:**

Our text this morning is a very familiar one to most Christians.

- It is the account of what is often called “The Triumphal Entry” of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - Many Christians know that every year, on the Sunday before Easter, this great event will be commemorated in their church...
    - The children will make Palm branches in Sunday School out of green construction paper and wave them around...
    - And there will be a sermon about the multitude and how they were enthusiastic to greet Jesus,
      - but then did a complete turn around a few days later and shouted for Him to be crucified.
- But there are very few who really understand the significance of this great piece of gospel history.
  - By Gospel history, I mean those great acts of God in history that specifically have to do with saving His people from their sins...
    - Not so much as individuals, but those corporate acts around the life of our Lord that accomplished our redemption to be applied to His elect in all ages.
    - His birth, anointing, death, resurrection, and ascension...
  - Too often, these great events are trivialised by attempts to re-enact them...
    - People will try to enter into the moment and re-live it year after year.
    - They want to go back to Jerusalem and try to enter into the experience all over again.
    - They want to pretend that they were there and feel that if they only could, they would somehow be sanctified.
- But God has not given us gospel history to re-enact...
  - He has given it to us to be received with faith and gratitude!
  - We are to look back on the great history of our redemption—this gospel history—and rest confidently on what the LORD did to save us from our sins.
    - The main goal is not to experience it again,

- but rather to be brought into living fellowship with the Lord who has done all these things to restore communion with us.
- We don't want to go back and wave Palm branches with a bunch of people that really didn't understand what they were doing—
  - They did not understand how all this fit in to God's great plan of redemption...
  - We look on these events from the perspective of those who know the rest of the story...
    - And because we know the rest of the story, they take on a whole new meaning for us...
    - So much so that Jesus Himself said the very least disciple in His kingdom would be greater than the greatest of the Old Testament prophets.

You see, God was doing something much bigger than the people knew at the time they stood beside the road and shouted their hosannas...

- I want you to see, as we begin this morning, that:

## **I. God was presenting King Jesus as the Passover to be sacrificed.**

A. Do you remember what the Passover was all about?

1. We are going to look at it some tonight in our evening meeting...
  - a. The Passover occurred at the time when the LORD brought Israel out of bondage to Egypt.
    - God wanted Israel to serve Him, but as they had been made slaves in Egypt, the Pharaoh would not allow it.
      - They were held by another master.
      - And so it was that when Pharaoh was instructed by the LORD to let Israel go and worship, he replied with arrogance,
        - “Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?”
    - In response, the LORD sent nine dreadful plagues upon Egypt that devastated their land.
      - He showed Pharaoh who He was!
      - But Pharaoh kept hardening his heart,
        - and God also hardened his heart as a judgement against him...

- His heart was so hard, that he continued to refuse to let Israel go even though he and his people were being destroyed by God’s judgement...
    - It was a supernatural stubbornness!
    - In this way, God showed His power over Egypt, showing that He is LORD.
- b. And after these nine plagues, the LORD at last sent the plague that broke Pharaoh and caused him to release Israel...
- In this tenth plague,
    - God sent out His angel to kill all of the first born of everything in Egypt... both man and beast!
  - But He commanded the angel to pass over the people of Israel...
    - He commanded the people of Israel to kill a lamb in place of their firstborn sons,
      - and place the blood on their door posts to mark themselves out from the Egyptians.
      - The point was that the Passover lambs took the place of the first born sons.
- c. God commanded His people to commemorate this great event every year.
- On the same month—which was to be counted as the first month of Israel’s year—
    - they were to take a lamb without blemish on the tenth day of the month...
    - and on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight, they were to kill and eat that Lamb to remember what God had done when He delivered them out of Egypt.

TRANS> Now you may be wondering:

- “What does all this have to do with the Triumphal Entry of Christ into Jerusalem?”
    - Well I will tell you.
2. When Jesus came to Jerusalem for the Passover, it was in order that He might become the true Passover Lamb.
- a. God accepted those Passover lambs in Egypt in place of their first born sons,
- but those lambs were really no substitute for a human being!

- Nevertheless, by requiring them to be offered, God was teaching His people that without a substitute, they would perish just like the Egyptians.
  - Israel's whole worship system emphasised this same truth...
    - Bulls and goats and lambs were continually sacrificed in testimony to the fact that God would provide a sacrifice that would truly take away sin.
    - Through these sacrifices, they worshipped and trusted in Christ who was promised...
- b. And so, when God sent His Son to this earth, He sent Him to give His life a ransom for many...
- He sent Him to be the Lamb of God that would die in the place of guilty sinners that were required of God for sinners to be saved.
  - This is why John the Baptist pointed to Jesus when he first saw Jesus coming to be baptised and said:
    - “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”
      - He recognised Him as the Passover to be sacrificed for Israel's sin and for the sins of the whole world!
    - Likewise, when Paul was speaking about the work Jesus did on cross declared it in these words:
      - “Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.”
      - He actually called Him “our Passover.”
        - He was the Passover Lamb that was judged in our place so that we could be forgiven.

TRANS> But what about the triumphal entry?

- c. Now it was on the tenth day of the month that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the donkey colt and was welcomed by the Hosannas of the crowd!
- The crowd did not know it—even the twelve disciples did not know it—but they were actually welcoming the Passover Lamb who was going to be offered as a sacrifice for sin on the fourteenth day of the month.
  - God was presenting **the** Passover Lamb that takes away the sin of the world.
    - Most of the people in the crowd were thinking He was going to finally remove the oppressive yoke of Rome from them at this time...

- But instead He had come to die as their Passover so that they could be brought into communion with God rather than having His judgement fall on them.
- It was a much greater salvation than any of them had envisioned!

TRANS> What is so marvellous about this is the fact that God orchestrated their actions (as well as those of their leaders who had Jesus crucified) so that The Passover Lamb was presented on the tenth day and offered up on the fourteenth day of the month.

B. You can see how Jesus is very deliberate about being presented as Israel's Messiah at this time...

1. He sets the whole thing up, as it were...

a. He knew that the multitude was very excited because He had just raised Lazarus from the dead.

- It was a notable miracle with a lot of witnesses who knew that Lazarus had been dead for three days—
  - and it had been done just two miles from Jerusalem, at Bethany!
  - Jerusalem was in a stir about it...
- Besides this, there was a whole crowd of people that had travelled along the road with Jesus from Galilee.
  - Some of these were very excited about Jesus and they were ready to make him king as soon as He was ready!

b. Knowing all this, Jesus tells His disciples to go and get a colt for Him...

- He sends them with prophetic insight,
  - telling them that they will see this donkey colt with its mother,
  - and they are to loose it and bring it to Him—
  - and that the owners will allow it when they tell them that the He needs it.
- And then He mounts this colt and rides it into the city!

c. Now there were hoards and hoards of people in Jerusalem at this time...

- It is estimated that around 3 million people went up to Jerusalem for the Passover in these days...
- Many of them were tenting along side of the road or in the fields.
- By riding into the city on colt, Jesus is deliberately drawing attention to Himself...
  - He is deliberately presenting Himself as Messiah.

2. This is so uncharacteristic of Him!
  - a. Up until now, He has been deliberately avoiding the limelight...
    - Many times after healings, He commanded those healed not to tell others who He was...
    - And when His disciples finally confessed fully that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God,
      - He told them to keep quiet about it.
  - b. There was good reason for His reticence to make Himself known before...
    - The people were looking for a Messiah that would lead them in successful battle against Rome and fill them with earthly riches and prosperity.
    - After feeding the five thousand, they had even tried to force Him to become king (in their way)...
      - He had studiously avoided their advances!
      - He would not be king on **their** terms.

TRANS> So what had brought about such a drastic change in His policy?

- It was this...

3. Now the time had come for Him to become King **on God's terms**.
  - a. Little did the crowd or the twelve understand that being Messiah on God's terms meant that He would be going to the cross in a few short days...
    - that He would become their Passover that year and forevermore!
  - b. They were still looking for deliverance from Rome and for earthly prosperity such as Israel enjoyed in Solomon's days, only greater...
    - And indeed, such days had been promised—the overthrow of Rome as well as greater prosperity than Solomon...
      - But these days would not come in the way the people expected.
      - The next stage in God's plan was the offering up of the Messiah on the cross to atone for their sins.
        - Jesus knew all this and He had explained it to His disciples, but they just did not get it.
  - c. Still, the time appointed had come for Jesus to be publicly presented as the Messiah...
    - Whatever people thought and whatever the disciples thought the Messiah ought to do would have to be worked out later...
      - The hour had come for Him to be presented as Israel's Passover...

- The time had come for Him to be publicly recognised as He came into the city make His great offering that would bless the entire world.
- And so He was presented...

C. All of this happened as an unmistakable fulfilment of prophecy.

1. In Matthew 21:4 & 5, you see how Matthew cites the Messianic prophecy of the triumphal entry in Zechariah 9:9:

- He writes:
  - Matthew 21:4-5: All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.'"
    - This would be a remarkable thing...
      - because in Zechariah's day as well as Jesus' day,
        - a King would not come on a beast of burden—which is what is described here...
          - He might possibly come in high estate on a well bred specially trained donkey, but not in lowliness on a beast of burden.
          - More then likely though,
            - He would come on a great white steed or seated in an elaborate chariot!
        - But here is Jesus riding on a lowly donkey without even a proper saddle.
          - Here He is,
            - not with trained musicians, important officials, priests, and large armies to escort Him,
            - but with a rag tag bunch of enthusiastic common people.

2. This was an odd way for the kind of Messiah that the people were expecting to come,

- In fact, it was entirely inappropriate!
  - but it was **not** an odd way for the true Messiah that God had sent...
    - the One who came to be our Passover...to give His life an offering for sin.

a. The lowly estate shows that He came to serve, not to be served...

- That His coming at this time was not about everyone doing things for Him...

- It was about Him doing everything for us... even the ultimate sacrifice.
  - He would suffer the very pains of Hell in our place!
    - Gilded chariots and crowns adorned with jewels were not in keeping with His calling to humble Himself to the point of death on a cross...
- b. The donkey on which He rode is also very appropriate because a king on a donkey (instead of a horse) was a symbol of peace.
- Jesus was not here to execute judgement, but to bring peace to the whole world.
  - He came that men and women from all over the world might be reconciled to God...
  - And He was coming to make the offering that would bring about that peace.

TRANS> So from all this you see what is going on here with the Triumphal Entry!

- God is presenting His Son as the Messiah who came to be our Passover—
  - who came to take our place so that God’s judgement will not fall upon us who have fled to Him for salvation, but will pass over us!
- Having established that this is so,

**II. Now I want you to see how this multitude rightly responds to Him—just as you must do.**

- Yes, even though they did not yet understand, God so orchestrated their actions that they gave Him proper service of worship and are a beautiful example for us.

A. First of all, see how they honour Him...

1. They took off their outer garments and they laid them under His feet.
  - This was a way of acknowledging their submission to Him as their Lord, as if to say to Him:
    - “You are our absolute master...”
    - “Do with us whatever you wish...”
    - “Walk on us if you so desire.”
    - “We are here to do your will and to offer our service to you.”
2. Your obedience needs to be complete like this...
  - It needs to be even like Jesus’ own obedience who obeyed even to the point of dying on the cross when the Father commanded it of Him.



- You will not lose anything if you learn to submit to your Lord without reservation...
  - This is the way you will lose your life, but the way you will find it.
  - You were not made to live apart from God any more than a fish is made to live apart from the water...
    - It is in full submission to your Lord that you will find your true place...
    - We are here to honour Him and our life will never make sense to us until we come to understand that.

B. Secondly, see how this multitude look to Jesus for salvation.

1. The word “Hosanna” means “O save” or “Save now,” or “Save we pray.”
  - These disciples knew that Jesus was the one who had come to save them...
  - They were not yet very clear about what that salvation entailed, but they knew that He was the One who would make things right for them...
2. Now we know that God is here presenting Jesus as the Passover that was soon to be offered up to God to save us from our sins...
  - Now that this has been revealed, you are a fool if you don’t come to Him with earnest hosannas!
    - Pleading with Him to save you, to save your children, to save our nation!
  - It would be better to be tortured on a rack or tortured by fire than be without the salvation Jesus came to bring.
    - Present to Him your sincere hosannas... forgive us our sins, deliver us from evil...save us now!
    - That is what He came to do!

C. Thirdly, see how they regard Him as the Son of David...

1. This was a Messianic title...
  - The Messiah was the one Israel was promised who would come to be their king,
    - He was called the Son of David because God said He would come from the line of Israel’s greatest king—King David, a man after God’s own heart.
2. As Messiah, He is the representative head of God’s people who brings them all together in communion with God and with each other.

- And as our Head, He is the One who represents the whole church before God...
  - When God accepts Him,
    - He accepts all His people with Him because He is tied together with us as a head is tied to its body...
  - God cannot reject the one without rejecting the other.
    - Those who are truly members of His body, drawing life from Him by faith, are brought into God's family through the Son of David.

D. Fourthly, see how they name Him as the One who is blessed.

1. Calling him blessed is to say that He is full of all goodness and grace—
  - Truly, He is full of the life of God—
    - all wisdom and justice and righteousness and mercy and holiness are in Him...
  - Truly, He is the fairest of ten thousand!
2. He is so full that He overflows with this goodness and grace—and pours out grace upon grace on us!
  - He fills us up with the life of God...enriching us with wisdom and love so that we can live in God's house forever...
  - He is a fountain of blessing—let us find our joy and delight in Him.
    - As our Passover, He has come to give us peace with God so that we can be filled with God's blessing as He is.

E. Fifthly, see how they acknowledge that He has come in the name of the Lord...

1. To come in the name of the Lord means that He has come at God's command to carry out God's business...
  - He is doing what He does for God...
  - He and the Father are One...
  - Jesus did not come independently to do His own will, but in fullest harmony and concord with His Father in Heaven!
2. Because Jesus was appointed to be our mediator who turns away the Father's wrath from us,
  - sometimes disciples will mistakenly suppose that Jesus came to change the Father's mind or to manipulate Him or force Him to be nice to us...
  - but this is not so.

- Jesus makes it crystal clear that He does nothing apart from the Father...
  - He assures us that it is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom.
3. If there were a division in the Trinity like that, we could never have full comfort in our salvation or in anything else!
- Jesus came to do the Father's will, and that will was to save all that the Father had appointed to be saved...
  - Jesus came in the Father's name and we are to learn of the Father by learning of the Son.
- F. Sixthly, see how they describe Him as a prophet...
1. This is found in verse 11—an answer to the question of those in Jerusalem who see all the fuss about Jesus and inquire,
- “Who is this?”
  - They answer simply, “The prophet from Nazareth of Galilee...”
2. And so He is and so you must see Him...
- A prophet is one who speaks to us for God...
  - The Bible speaks of the One great prophet that we all must hear if we are to be saved, and these disciples confess Jesus as that prophet.
  - It is through Him that all the prophets and apostles of the Lord spoke.
3. What does this mean for you? How are you to hear Jesus today?
- It means that you must come to the scriptures and receive them as the word of God by which Christ speaks...
  - Jesus says that His true sheep hear His voice and follow Him, and will not follow the voice of a stranger...
  - That means that they don't order their lives around advice from Oprah on TV, or latest pop psychology, or even their grandmother...
    - It means that your opinions and your practices and your faith is shaped and refined continually by the word of God.
    - You live according to truth.
      - Jesus is the prophet that has come from heaven.

TRANS> What a marvellous thing it is to see how this multitude received Him.

**III. But what should we make of this reception... Let's examine it a little more...**

A. Did this hosanna shouting palm branch waving multitude really understand what they were saying about Jesus?

1. Well not, not exactly...

a. Their words are way ahead of their understanding in this case...

- God wanted His Son to be honoured.
- Therefore, He directed them in such a way that they used scriptures to praise their Messiah and to say what should have been said even though they did not fully understand yet.

b. Their faith was not complete, and there are two reasons why this was so...

1) The first reason was not their fault...

a) God's revelation of His redemptive work was not yet complete.

- Jesus had not yet gone to the cross and risen again.
- It was really quite impossible for anyone to fully understand the work that Messiah had come to do until He had actually done that work.
- Even the disciples did not understand it until it at this time.

b) And besides that, the Spirit of God had not yet been poured out...

- You see, in His wisdom, God did not pour out His Spirit on His church until after the work of Christ was complete...
- Then the Spirit was given in fullness in order to enable us to understand the work of Christ...
- In one way, the gospel is very simple, but in another way, it is very difficult for us—
  - it is even impossible unless God opens the eyes of our understanding by His Spirit.
  - It is not about being more intelligent than someone else,
    - it is about being illuminated by the Spirit.

TRANS> So it was not their fault that revelation was not complete and it was not their fault that the Spirit of God who enables us to receive that revelation had not yet been poured out...

2) But there is a sense in which their blindness was their fault...

a) The main reason they were confused about the principle work that Jesus had come to do is because they had hard hearts...

- To them, the big problem was the Romans and with things like sickness and poverty and death...

- These are all things that God has afflicted us with to humble us and to show us that there is something wrong,
  - but they are not our principle problem...
  - Jesus will save us from them, but they are not the real focus of His messianic work.
  
- b) If these hosanna shouting followers had really known God as He is revealed in the Old Testament (and even in nature) and had been honest and clear about what they were...
  - They would have seen that their greatest problem was their sin and guilt...
    - That they had not honoured the living God or done His will...
    - That they had not lived in communion with Him, but that their lives continually told lies about Him.
    - That rather than living in love as He had appointed, they were full of cursing and bitterness.
  - If they had seen things as they ought to have seen them,
    - They would have understood that the principle work Messiah must do to save His people
      - was not to deliver them from their enemies,
      - but to save His people from their sins.

TRANS> So you see that when they said Hosanna—"Save us we pray"...

- they were thinking of salvation from their problems and sorrows—
  - which salvation Messiah does give to His people...
    - but they were not thinking—at least not so much—of salvation from their sin—and restoration to true fellowship with God.

2. But having said this, we must look at ourselves...

- a. We have a confession that we make, and we say a lot of fine words...
  - We call Jesus our Lord and Saviour and we acknowledge that He is the way, the truth and the life...
    - but do we really serve Him as our Lord and trust Him as our Saviour as we should?
    - Are we really looking to Him to fill us with the life that God has called us to live?

- b. And not only that, we have this fullness of revelation from God...
  - and yet there is so much blindness in us...
    - I know that there is because if we really understood all that Christ is and all that God is, we would be very different people!
    - We would be so full of gratitude that we would gladly lay down our lives for others the way Jesus laid down his life.
- c. Our faith is not yet made perfect...
  - We still have a long way to go just as these hosanna shouting worshippers did.

B. But take heart!

- 1. A lot of people glory in being hard on these poor worshippers...
  - a. They tell about how on this day they shouting Hosanna, and a few days later they are shouting crucify Him...
    - But what reason do they have to suppose that these are the same people?
    - There were some three million people in Jerusalem for the Passover...
      - And you can be sure that they were not all welcoming Jesus when He rode in on the donkey colt.
        - We know for sure that some were not from the other gospels.
        - Some were not shouting hosannas, but curses.
  - b. And I am also sure that there were some fickle people who did join both crowds,
    - but there were also the twelve disciples...or the eleven...
      - They ran away, they denied Him in some cases,
        - but they certainly did not call for His crucifixion!
      - Neither did Jesus' mother and the other women who followed Jesus...
      - Neither did Lazarus and Martha and Mary...
        - or those 500 to whom He appeared after He was raised from the dead.
        - They were confused and perplexed, but they did not turn on their Lord.
- 2. This is something you need to see...
  - a. You can have no comfort unless you do see it...

- Your faith is not yet perfected, just as these Hosanna shouters faith was not yet perfected...
  - And the faith of the believers around you is not yet perfected either.
- b. But you see, God accepted them and their worship...
- Their salvation was not based on the perfection of their faith and neither is yours...
  - True saving faith is faith that sincerely looks to Jesus for salvation...
    - It is faith that knows it needs Him and that knows He is the Messiah and that casts itself on Him for mercy.
- c. Now don't misunderstand what I am saying...
- 1) I am not for a moment suggesting that the content of your faith doesn't matter...
    - It matters very much...
    - And those who have genuine faith will grow and mature in their faith.
      - They are sincere, so they are not indifferent about it all...
      - They are earnestly looking to Christ for salvation and He picks them up where they start and moves them to where they need to be.
  - 2) Neither I am saying that it is okay today—when we have so much more revelation—for us to look at Jesus as primarily a Saviour from our troubles and sorrows...
    - There are many today who refuse to see Him as a Saviour from sin...
      - And they are not saved at all.
      - Now that He is revealed as crucified for our sins,
        - we can no longer be considered His disciples unless we confess that He alone is the way to God.

TRANS> But still, the point remains...

- You are not saved because of the perfection of your faith...
    - You are saved if you are relying on Jesus
3. There are three responses you ought to have to this reality...
- a. First, you ought to be greatly comforted...
    - Though you may be weak and just getting started...
      - If your faith is sincerely in Jesus to do in you what needs be done and for you what needs to be done to make you right with God...

- It is enough...
  - You can take confidence that you will never be cast out by Him.
  
- b. Secondly, you ought to be gentle with others when you see deficiency in their faith...
  - If they are seeking their Lord, then give them some room to grow...
    - Just because you have come to understand something does not mean that everyone else who has not yet attained that understanding is worthy of rejection...
    - We do not require disciples to believe everything in our confession to become members...
      - We only require that they make a clear confession of the things that are essential to salvation...
  
  - Rather than criticising the one who is deficient,
    - come along side of them and show them the way of God more perfectly the way Aquila and Priscilla did with Apollos...
      - and the way our Lord did with His twelve disciples!
      - Deal with them the same way you deal (or ought to deal) with a little child!
  
- c. And thirdly, you should be encouraged to pray earnestly for salvation...
  - God has presented Jesus to us as the Lamb of God that was offered to take away sin...
  - If we realise that we are not yet perfected, then we need to look to Him to keep working in us.
    - Pray that He would work mightily in you to sanctify you...
    - Pray that He would work mightily in other believers and in your children...
    - Pray that He would work mightily in His church to bring it to maturity.
    - And pray that He would work mightily in the world to bring many to salvation.