LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 21 (Part 1) :1-17

The Triumphal Entry

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, The Lord needs them, and he will send them at once. This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden. The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them.

They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, Who is this? And the crowd said, This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee. Stop there if you would, please. Let's pray. Holy Spirit, we open our hearts to you that you would instruct us, that you would enlighten us.

We pray that you would illuminate our hearts with wisdom and insight and application. Lead us, Lord God, in this study, we pray. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

This is, as we started the 21st chapter of Matthew, we make a huge change here in our study in that we enter kind of a, well, the last, it's not physically the last chapter of the book, but we enter the last chapter of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. We get into the last week here in this section, and there is just so much incredible prophetic fulfillment and power that goes on in these last chapters. You know, Matthew is already the one gospel writer who refers more to Old Testament fulfillments in the life of Jesus than any other gospel writer, but even so, this last week and this last stage of what is going on is so enormous, and it's very, very difficult to overstate the importance of these things, and hopefully I'll be able to kind of

show you that a little bit. The part that we've read here in Matthew looks all like the people are ready to accept Jesus. It's kind of interesting, isn't it?

For those of you that are into the Lord of the Rings trilogy, which I happen to be, yeah, it's kind of like an annual thing. We have to watch all three movies and all the appendices that go with them, and the director's cut. It's like hours of Lord of the Rings. It's really fun. It's great, and yeah.

Anyway, the third movie in the trilogy series is Return of the King. If Matthew was being made into a movie, this would be a fourth part, because this really is kind of a fourth installment of what Matthew is doing, and this would be called The Rejection of the King, even though it looks right here, right now, like everything's kind of going for him. In fact, I imagine the disciples were all pretty tanked with this whole idea of the crowd just freaking out and praising God and saying, Hosanna in the highest, and calling Jesus by all these messianic titles, like Son of David, and saying, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. I mean, this must have been really exciting for these guys, because all up to this point, Jesus had been basically telling people just to kind of cool their jets. Every time he'd healed somebody, he'd say, yeah, but don't tell anybody, and then he'd do something, don't tell anybody, and don't tell anybody, yeah, but don't tell anybody, and he'd warn to the people, you know, don't tell what's going on, and so forth.

And now all of a sudden, it all changes. Jesus gets on this donkey colt, rides through the city gates of Jerusalem, which, by the way, is now rife with people. I mean, this is Passover. This is Passover, and people, Jews, and Gentiles, for that matter, believing Gentiles, come from all over the known world to worship and participate in Passover, and the city of Jerusalem was said to swell to around 2 million people. That's a lot of people.

And there's already kind of an excitement, you know, whenever you get a crowd together, there's already going to be a buzz, you know, and it's festival time, and they're worshiping, and it's all very cool, but there's an added buzz this year, and that added buzz is basically because for the last almost three years, Jesus has been performing his earthly ministry, healing people, and it says, it says right here, the whole city is stirred, and there's an excitement, and an anticipation, and an expectation of what's going to happen. Are we going to see some miracles? And I imagine there's even some miracle hunters kind of walking around, waiting to find Jesus and stick close to him because we want to see some fun stuff go on, and gee, could this be the Messiah? And they're talking, and who is this guy anyway? Oh, he's from Nazareth.

Yeah, I don't remember any guys coming out of Nazareth, so what's all that about? And they're just, and there's all this talk, and buzz, and stuff going on at this time, and Jesus breaks with tradition with, in terms of what he's been doing for the last three years, and he allows the people to publicly declare him

Messiah for the very first time in his ministry, to allow this kind of a public declaration to take place. Very first time. It's got to be thrilling to the disciples, and so anyway, we're gonna, we're gonna kind of look about what that's, what that's all about, but let's start looking at what these verses are saying here that we're covering. In your Bible again, as you kind of start looking through the first verses, they tell us here that Jesus had made arrangements for his entrance into the city by having a couple of his disciples go into a nearby village, Bethany or Bethpage, one of the two that are right there at the Mount of Olives, and he told them, when you go into the city, you're gonna just, or in the village rather, you're gonna barely get through the end of the village, and there's gonna, you're gonna see a colt, or rather a donkey with its colt tied up there, and just untie him and start bringing him, and if anybody, wouldn't that be weird?

And if anybody says anything, just go, the Lord needs it, and, and it'll be cool, and they'll let you go, and just tell him that he'll bring it back, and, and so they do it, and they find it just the way Jesus said, and they bring the, the, the donkey colt, and they begin to lay their garments over the colt, and some of them down on the ground, and, and cut branches, and, and as they near the city of Jerusalem, the people start just clamoring. You can tell that they're just, they're buzzed, and they're waiting for something, and as they see Jesus coming, this huge crowd just, just amasses and begins to, to shout all of these amazing things, which Matthew tells us is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Let me, he quotes it here, but let me just show you on the screen exactly the prophecy that is being quoted here. It says, rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold, your king is coming to you, righteous, and having salvation is he, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. This is the exact prophecy made hundreds of years before the event took place, which Jesus fulfilled when he came through the city gates.

Oh, and this whole thing about being on a donkey colt, don't let that get lost on you, because there's, it's very specific reason. You'll notice that Jesus didn't come riding into the city on a white steed, you know, brandishing a sword and, and, and coming in as a conquering, you know, hero or something like that. He came, as it says here in Zechariah, humbly riding on a colt, you know, the, the colt of a donkey, the foal of a donkey, that's kind of humbling, you know, you don't, you don't come riding into a city on a donkey because you're about to conquer, you know. I mean, you're not gonna cause people to kind of go, ooh, you know, when you come riding in on a donkey colt. He's coming humbly because he's coming peacefully.

This is really a statement that Jesus is making to the people of Jerusalem, the people of Israel at large, and he's saying, I come to you in peace. In fact, Jesus is extending one last opportunity for the people to receive him as Messiah. I come not in judgment, not yet. I come extending salvation. I come in peace.

I come to say to you, will you receive me as your Messiah? Will you open your hearts? And it looks like this whole crowd is kind of going along with the whole thing, and, and again, to the, to the disciples, this must have really been exciting, but here's the point. This is why we call it the rejection of the king, because in less than a week, many of these same people are going to be clamoring for his crucifixion. They're essentially going to be giving him over, if you will, to the Gentile authorities that he might be put to death.

It's difficult, you know, to explain just how momentous, how huge this event is. You know, we Christians, I got so many things going through my mind, excuse me if I fall over myself here a little bit, but we Christians, we read these passages in the Bible, you know, like what we're reading here, the Triumphal Entry, and we know what it's called, we refer to it by its name, oh yeah, that's the Triumphal Entry, I know all about that, I've read it millions of times, and we read it, and we go, oh yeah, that's really cool. And we even read these sections where Matthew says this was to fulfill what it's, you know, the prophet Zechariah, when he said, you know, da-da-da-da-da, and we read it and we go, yeah, that's really cool. And we forget just how enormous, first of all, and how wonderfully blessed we are to have the prophetic in the Scriptures. Do you guys understand how dynamic and how powerful that is?

And do you know and understand that, you know, people will say sometimes, well, you know, there are a lot of world religions, yeah, well, you know what? The other ones are missing something. They're missing the element of the prophetic. And the reason is, is because only God knows the beginning from the end and the end from the beginning. And He can speak of what happens in the future as if it already took place in the past, and He does with amazing detail, even to the point of saying that Jesus would come through the gates of the city riding on a donkey.

He would come humbly, open-hearted, peaceably, extending salvation one last time to the people of Israel to receive them as their Messiah. It's powerful and it's incredible. But here's the thing about this. This event that you and I are looking at here in Matthew 21, this single event is so big that God not only told Zechariah this was going to take place, he told Daniel. You guys remember Daniel?

The guy who was thrown into the pit with the lions and God saved him out of that and so forth. The same Daniel who just did a lot of incredible things. Daniel was a man who received many visitations from the Lord in terms of prophetic sort of statements. He even received angelic visitors from time to time, and he wrote all that down in the book that you and I know and study called Daniel. But there was one particular time when an angelic visitor came to Daniel and he said, there's an event coming on the prophetic calendar that I want to make you aware of.

And I'm even going to tell you when it happens. I'm going to give you the ability to figure out when this event is going to take place. Now that's unprecedented because usually God doesn't put anything on the calendar. He'll say something's going to happen, but he'll just say it's going to happen. He doesn't necessarily tell us when.

For example, we don't know when the Lord is coming again. In fact, the Bible tells us no man knows the day or the hour when the Lord comes again, even though Harold Camping tried to convince us several times during his ministry that he knew when the Lord was coming again. He was always wrong. Did you guys hear that Harold Camping just died just like a couple of weeks ago? He now knows why he was so wrong.

And, you know, it's arrogance to go against the word of God and, you know, those of us who took the word of God seriously and literally, we knew that Harold Camping wasn't right because no man knows the day or the hour when Christ is returning. All right? You know? So there you go. But this is interesting because this event, this event here, was not only foretold, we were told when it would take place.

And it's in this prophecy that is written in the book of Daniel that I'm going to show you up on the screen here. This is when this angelic visitor came to Daniel. It's recorded in the ninth chapter of Daniel. And the angel said to him, The angel said to him, Now that sounds all kind of rather mysterious. We'll leave that up for a minute so you can kind of look at it.

Let me explain what's going on here. The sevens are seven-year blocks. All right? So he says that from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, he says you can count this many years. First of all, seven sevens, or seven blocks of seven years, right?

And 62 sevens, or 62 blocks of seven years, that comes to a total of 69 blocks of seven years, or 483 years. Now, when did the decree go out to rebuild Jerusalem? Well, it was actually given by the king of the Medo-Persian Empire, a man by the name of Artaxerxes, King Artaxerxes, who just was moved by the hand of the Lord to put out a decree to rebuild Jerusalem. You say, well, why would a Medo-Persian king do or care anything about that? You have to understand that the Jews were living in his kingdom.

They had been taken captive. You know, God put the nation of Israel in the promised land, and he said, I want you to worship me. And if you obey me, everything is going to go good for you. But if you don't obey me, eventually your enemies will come, and they will uproot you from the land. And that is exactly what happened.

In fact, God finally sent a Babylonian army to completely wipe out their defenses in Israel, and they took the people of Israel captive. This is all history, by the way, guys. This is historical information. The Babylonian army came in, trashed the city of Jerusalem, which, of course, was the bastion of their defenses, and they took the people into exile into Babylon for 70 years. For 70 years they lived in exile.

Now, during that 70-year period, Babylon even got conquered. Babylon was conquered by the Medo-Persian empire. The Medes and the Persians came to power. They conquered the Babylonians, and in so doing, they continued to rule over the Jews. And God just gave a heart to this king named Artaxerxes to send word to the Jews that they were free to go back to their homeland and rebuild the city.

Well, that decree was made back in 445 BC. And so what God told Daniel was 483 years after the decree to go back and rebuild the city as given, the anointed one will be revealed. So he basically told him how to figure it out. Well, if you count forward 483 solar years from the starting point of 445 BC, you end up right around 2930 to 30 AD, which is right smack dab in the middle of Jesus' public ministry on earth. Well, it even gets a little more specific than that, although some people dispute it.

There was a man who years ago, by the name of Sir Robert Anderson, wrote a book that is called The Coming Prince. I can even show you a picture of this, and I was told that we have a copy of this in our bookstore. Sir Robert Anderson wrote this book to show that not only did the prophecy of Daniel give the general time of when Messiah would be revealed, he took the day that the command was given to go and rebuild the city, counted it forward 483 years, and landed on, guess what day? The day that Jesus rode through the city of Jerusalem on a donkey and was for the very first time publicly declared to be Messiah. To.

The. Day. Okay? That is why it is difficult to overstate the prophetic importance of what is going on in this passage that we're looking at, and how it has been fulfilled so powerfully. Now, we're told in this passage that the crowd was jubilant as Christ came in.

Look at verse 8. Again, it tells us, Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees, and they spread them on the road. And verse 9 says, The crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, Hosanna to the Son of David! Notice, remember you guys, you know that Son of David is a messianic title because the Messiah was predicted to come from the lineage of David. Right?

And so, by calling him Son of David, they are declaring his messianic title. Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! They're quoting Psalm 118 here, a passage universally understood to refer to Messiah.

And it says that the whole city was just absolutely stirred. So, suffice it to say, this is a powerful prophetic moment here in the scripture. But, with the coming of Jesus... here at this time these first this this prophetic period is is is completed that is given us in Daniel you know after 77 blocks of seven years and followed by the these these 62 blocks of you have seven years you have these 69 and cry as is the Messiah will be revealed boom it happened it's done it's done so guess what we're done with with these first 69 seven-year blocks what's next on the prophetic calendar as far as they are concerned at this time well it actually goes on to talk about it later on or slightly later on in Daniel chapter 9 will show you this passage to after the 62 sevens and and that means along with the the seven sevens and the 62 sevens what will happen the anointed one will be cut off that's a euphemism for he will die and so Daniel is told that after these 69 blocks of seven years starting from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem all to the point where a Messiah is revealed it will be a very short-lived sort of a revelation and then he will be cut off and that is exactly what we're going to find as we read through the rest of Matthew's gospel account and we're going to read about his betrayal his arrest his trial his mocking and beating and ultimately his crucifixion exactly what Daniel was told he will be cut off let's keep reading verse 12 here in our text says that Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves it is written he said to them my house will be called a house of prayer but you are making it a den of robbers this is something you'll remember that Jesus did at the beginning of his public ministry and he did at the conclusion of his public ministry here as it is recorded in Matthew 21 and and and he is he is chasing people out of what is considered to be the outer courts of the temple Jesus didn't actually go into the temple itself he just went into the outer precincts that's where they were doing the buying and selling but you have to remember something about the outer court that was the only place that a Gentile could go a believing Gentile who came for Passover was not allowed into the temple it just wasn't allowed because they were Gentile the only place they could go is in the outer courts that that's where they would go to meet God that's where they would go to pray that's where they would go to offer their sacrifices they couldn't get past that point but it was there the Jews decided to set up this commerce and what was going on here well they were kind of sort of doing people a favor because you see they were selling sacrificial animals some people traveled so far to come for Passover it was unrealistic to bring an animal along to sacrifice there at the temple so they would just bring their money bag along which of course was much easier to bring along on the trip and then they would buy a sacrificial animal once they got there so they would get to the temple and they would take

their money and they would buy these animals for sacrifice but the problem was there was a scam going on first of all they were being overcharged and second of all the priests who would inspect the animal before sacrifice would many times reject the animal that they themselves had put up for sale and say no this animal has a defect you're gonna have to go get another one what a convenient sort of arrangement then you have the money changers who are converting people's currency from where they live into the temple shackle and because no other money was accepted there at the temple and so they had to bring their their currency from wherever they lived and they would have the money changers convert that money over to something that was usable in the temple again they were being cheated by these individuals and who were charging exorbitant interest and so forth and and it was just a big fat money-making sort of a deal and everybody knew it and Jesus knew it and so he went in and he basically cleared out the shady business saying this is to be a place of prayer this is to be a place where people come to meet God and you're standing in the way and you're and you're letting all this stuff go on and so you know and and I agree by the way with that in in the larger sense that anything that frustrates people's ability to worship God you know we ought to get rid of it you know what I mean and I'm not talking here about personal preference either there are personal preferences in worship you might find it difficult to worship to a certain kind of music I find it difficult to worship to a certain kind of music you might find it difficult to worship in a certain you know situation standing up sitting down that's not what we're talking about here we're talking about a situation where in the Jews case they were literally standing in the way of people worshiping they had to go through them first to be obedient to the Lord and it's a completely different situation verse 14 look with me there in the text it says the blind and the lame came to him at the temple and he healed them and then by the way the blind and the lame who usually hung around Jesus were at the temple anyway because that's where they would do their panhandling and I think that's rather smart sort of a thing I mean if you're gonna pay I could never figure out why people go to Walmart to panhandle why you know I mean I assume they're probably going there because people have their money out and they're ready to spend it if I was a panhandler I'd sit right down in front of a church wouldn't you I mean get people when they're coming out of church and feeling good about God you know you know get out your little cardboard sign and let them have it you know sort of a thing you know so but and that's what these guys would do the the blind and the lame would park themselves right by the temple because as people were coming out they knew they had their money available and they were trying to get some handouts and so forth well it says that Jesus healed them he healed those people and then it says but when the chief priests verse 15 and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area Hosanna to the Son of David they were indignant do you hear what these children are saying they asked him yes replied Jesus have you never read from the lips of children and infants you have

ordained praise and he left them and went out of the city to Bethany where he spent the night just two things quickly I want to show you from this passage it just kind of want to bring out here a little bit as we as we get ready to close first of all who are the main characters in these last few verses that we're looking at well we've got the blind and the lame we've got the little children obviously we've got Jesus but we but the blind and the lame the little children and then we have the religious leaders the chief priests and the teachers of the law which are the teachers of the Word of God and what's interesting or what you may not know about the chief priests and the teachers of the law is that they despised the blind and the lame because they considered blind people and lame people to be under the curse of God do you remember this was a very common sort of a belief even the disciples remember they came upon this blind man and the disciples came to Jesus and they said hey Jesus tell us who messed up this guy or his parents that he's now blind and Jesus said it wasn't because of sin that this man was born blind so you see the assumption was there if you've got something bad going on in your life you're obviously a scumbag sinner right isn't that the same assumption that Job's friends made when he was going through his situation so this was a very common thing they just believe these people were just like throwaways and children for the most part were considered to be unimportant I mean that's why the disciples when remember the the mothers and stuff were bringing their babies to Jesus that he might lay hands on them and so forth and the disciples were like get the kids away we got business going on here we got important things to do and Jesus you remember rebuked them he said no no guys let the little children come to me they're cool I'm into kids that's a bit of a paraphrase but you know what I'm saying anyway the point is the common sort of idea was children are a nuisance the blind and the lame are throwaways we don't really pay attention to them they're really not a big deal but what does Jesus do first of all he heals the blind and the lame and receives the praise from the children that just really ticks off the religious leaders and here's what we find we find that the blind people actually could see Jesus we find that the little children who are uneducated knew nothing they knew who he was and we find that the religious leaders and the highly educated could neither see him nor know him and you know this is all kind of in keeping with what Jesus had said early you remember back in Matthew chapter 11 there was a statement that Jesus made as he was praying and he said he said I thank you father Lord of heaven and earth that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children he said yes father for such was your gracious will you know I have I got nothing against education nothing at all nothing wrong with learning but listen you're not going to find God in a book at least not a textbook there's there's a book here you can find him in but even here even just knowing Knowing this isn't enough, the heart has to be open. There are people who know the Bible, and I mean know it from the beginning to the end, and they still haven't found God, which

is kind of crazy, because it's not through education, it's not through intellect that he reveals himself, it's through the open, longing heart.

And then the last thing that's kind of interesting about this is that we find that the religious leaders were okay with having animals traipsing around the temple courts and the sound of money changers cheating people as they converted their currency, and that was okay. They'd gotten used to that, but what they could not abide was the sound of little children praising God in the temple courts. Crazy as it may sound, that is religion. That's kind of my definition of empty religion. Religion wouldn't know a genuine relationship with God or a true spiritual event if it smacked him in the face, you know?

Because religion is all about just fulfilling the rules, getting the job done, but there's nothing genuine in empty religion. You know, the reason I bring it up, we read stuff like this about the religious leaders and we think, well, you know, that couldn't happen to me, and I think we gotta be careful. You know, we just finished the book of Joshua here at the end of December on our Wednesday night study, and we're gonna be getting into the book of Judges this coming Wednesday, and I'm excited about that because I like the book of Judges, but I gotta tell you, the very beginning of the book of Judges kind of depresses me a little bit, because it reminds me of something, and that is that it only takes one generation for a people to abandon the Lord. They were all zealous and full of passion as long as Joshua was alive and the people who were surrounded Joshua, but when Joshua and his closest men died off, the very next generation, we get into the book of Judges and here's what it says. It says, and that generation knew not the Lord.

And you're thinking, how in the world is that possible? The very, I mean, mom and dad were passionate for God, and the very next generation doesn't know God, but you know what? They were still going through the motions. They were still doing the sacrifices. They were still bringing their animals.

They were still observing Passover and some of the other Jewish feasts, but they didn't know God. See that's empty religion. Empty religion goes through the motions of doing the church thing, but it doesn't know God. There's nothing real. There's nothing genuine.

There's nothing spiritual. There's nothing sincere about organized religion. It's just there to go through the motions, and when you ask them why they do things, the question or the answer always comes back, because we always have, right? Which is the dumbest reason in the world to do anything. There ought to be a passion behind what we do for the Lord.

I'm going to end with this. In just a few chapters here, and when we get into Matthew chapter 24, we're going to get into some really powerful prophetic end times statements that our Lord makes in that chapter.

But in that Matthew chapter 24, Jesus is going to characterize the age that you and I are living in right now, which is called the church age, right? Or it's called the end times. Did you know we're living in the end times?

The end times began when the church was inaugurated on Pentecost, which is recorded in Acts chapter 2, up to the present time. We are living in the church age right now, the end times. Jesus gave us nine characteristics of what life would be like during that time period called the church age, and do you know that one of the characteristics is that the love of many will grow cold? It's one of the characteristics. So guess we can't sit around twiddling our thumbs saying, oh, that would never happen to me.

Because Jesus said it would literally characterize the church age. What that tells you and I is we need to keep our passion strong for the Lord. Hopefully that's why you're here today, and that's what you get out of what we do every time we come together and study the Word of God. It's my prayer, it's my hope that you walk out of here built up in the Lord, more passionate, more desirous to serve God, more edified and encouraged, you know, and strengthened in your faith. But that's what we need to be.

We need to stay strong because we're living in a time period where the wickedness is increasing and hearts are also going cold, and we need to say, you know what, but that isn't gonna be me. My heart is gonna stay strong for the Lord, and the passion and the fire of God's grace is going to continue to burn in my life.