

Behold Your King

Belcroft Bible Church

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Please turn in your copy of God's Word to Mark 11, Mark 11:1 through 11, which will serve as our exposition for this morning. And yes, we have made it to chapter 11, hard to believe. We have arrived at the arrival of the king. In so many ways, the time has come for Jesus, as He now arrives at His, really, His sovereign destination of Jerusalem, as planned, then, as we have learned, predicted clearly so many times. The triumphal entry, as it's so often referred to, is a watershed moment of which there is no turning back.

Now, do not miss it. Mark as spent ten chapters, ten chapters teaching and showing us, really, three years, three years of the public life and ministry of Christ. However, Mark now turns, here in chapter 11, and he will begin to zero in, like a laser focus, specifically on one week, one week of the Lord's life. And how many chapters will Mark spend teaching us on one week of the Lord's life? Six. He spent ten chapters for three years; he's going to give us six chapters on one week. That is profound, and you do not want to miss that. Mark is clearly emphasizing the Passion Week. And there, many have called Mark the "Passion Gospel" because of the heavy emphasis that he lays on this in such a short amount—because it is by far the shortest gospel. And yet to have at least one third of his gospel be simply on one week is quite enlightening. Mark wants us to see in this one week, as he's been showing us throughout the past three years, that everything that will happen in this week is not happenstance. But it was divinely designed and controlled, orchestrated and planned, and brought about by Christ Himself. As a matter of fact, this event, the triumphal entry, is actually one of the few events in the gospel account where all four gospel accounts record the same event, further showing the emphasis, the importance, the culmination, if you will, at this time.

Today, we will see what we have already been singing multiple times, to the praise of His glory and grace. Today, we will see Jesus openly and publicly display Himself as the coming King like He has never done before. You will see, today in our text, that Jesus undeniably and unequivocally and publicly, openly without any shame, without any hesitation, promotes Himself and shows Himself to be the King of glory. Which, if you're tracking with me as we've been through this study, this is a massive change for Christ. Because, you'll remember, He's been telling everyone—what? “Be quiet. Don't say anything. Don't say a word to anybody who I am.” And now He Himself is going to step out and say, “Here I am.” If you're tracking, it's a bold and glorious moment in the ministry of Christ. And you cannot miss it.

So often, because a story like this, an episode like this in the gospel account, is so familiar for so many of us, we can fall prey to handling the text whimsically. And I don't want that for us at all. And so, I pray that we will look at this story with fresh eyes, lest we allow the familiarity with the text to breed contempt in our hearts, and that would not be good for any of us.

You follow along silently now as I read our passage for exposition this morning. Mark 11:1 through 11, hear the Word of the Lord:

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’” And they went away and found a colt tied at the door outside in the street, and they untied it. And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Amen.

I think it's important now that I set some context for us, even though we've been traveling with Mark very intimately and very methodically. It's, I think, paramount that I give us even the broader context and pull John and the other synoptics in so we can really see and understand what's going on at this moment, in this episode. The synoptic gospels—you'll know that's Matthew, Mark, and Luke—all have Jesus moving from Galilee to Jerusalem in what I would call a linear line, a straight fashion. Almost as you read the synoptic gospels, if you're not familiar with John, or even the historical setting of what's going on, chronologically, you would almost think that this is the first time Jesus enters Jerusalem. Because, the way the synoptics are lined out, it really moves from Galilee straight to Jerusalem in a [linear] fashion.

However, we understand that this is not the first time that Jesus has been to Jerusalem. We know that Jesus has made many trips to Jerusalem, that is the city of David, as He was commanded, as all the Jews were commanded, to attend for the special festivals and the holy days, like Passover. Of course, we can see this even in His youth. When you go back to Luke chapter 2, verse 41, where it says emphatically that Mary and Joseph would go up to Jerusalem every year for the celebration of the Passover. Most specifically, this is where John's gospel becomes really helpful for us as it fills in what the synoptic gospels—again, Matthew, Mark, and Luke; they kind of go together chronologically. (That's what the word *synoptic* means. It means literally to see together. They're all kind of telling the same stories because they're focused on this). The synoptic gospels focus on the Galilean ministry of Christ, the massive Galilean ministry, His primarily almost three-year ministry in the outer reaches of Galilee. Where John, however, focuses primarily on the Judean ministry of Christ that would be His early Judean ministry, which happens before He even goes into Galilee, and then obviously His latter Judean ministry, which is where we're at right now in the text.

John focuses almost entirely on Christ in Jerusalem. As a matter of fact, if you want to take and compare John with Mark, by way of the focus on the last week John has 21 chapters, and in the 21 chapters, John spends half in one week. Literally, he spends half of his gospel right here. John chapter 12 starts right here, where we are, and he goes all the way to John chapter 21. You could see, if you haven't figured out the last week of Christ is pretty important, right? That's what the gospel writers show us. So important, so emphatic. But John is also helpful because in the Gospel of John, it shows us very clearly that Jesus had been to Jerusalem for Passovers not only in His youth, as we saw in Luke, but three specific times in those three years. He went up every year during those three years of public ministry that we see in the gospels. You can see that in John chapter 2, verse 13; John chapter 6, verse 4; and here, as we see it here in Mark and in John chapter 12, verse 1. So we're in that third, if you will, time of Passover in the public ministry of Christ.

Now, the reason why I'm explaining this is because I do not want you to miss the mood, the contextual mood, surrounding this event. There is an important mood of anticipation and mood of angst and worry and concern, and even fright at one point, and excitement at the other. You could cut the air with a knife. Where Mark starts us, right here in Mark 11, if we parachute into this and don't really get a sense of the intensity of the environment, we're going to miss out on it, and I don't want us to do that. I don't want us to think that Jesus, much like we're watching on the news, is like part of one of these big caravans that's coming out of South America towards our southern border because they've never been here. That's not what's going on. He's part of a pretty big caravan—we're going to see that. But Jesus has been to Jerusalem many times, many times.

To rightfully set the stage for this triumphal entry, you have to consider John chapter 11, and you really need to read it and understand what's going on there, if you're going to get this right. John chapter 11, you'll remember, is the raising of Lazarus from the dead, which happened, chronologically, about eight weeks or so before where we are right now, in Mark 11. Probably about the end of January, middle of January in AD 30, is when Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. It was at the raising of Lazarus from the dead that the religious leaders set out emphatically, undeniably, and even publicly, to kill Christ. You can read about that in John chapter 11, verse 53. They set out emphatically after He raises Lazarus from the dead. And

the crowds really start to follow Christ, really start to go after him, overwhelmed at what they saw, when a dead man comes back to life. And the religious leaders say, “That’s it. We can’t deal with this anymore. We’ve got to kill Him.” And you can read about that in John chapter 11, verse 53.

And what happens then, at that time, is Jesus removes Himself publicly. In many ways, He goes into hiding; He goes into hiding to a place up north of where they were in Bethany (which is where He raises Lazarus from the dead) to a place called Ephraim. And He goes there with His disciples, in large part, in hiding. He’s removed Himself from the public eye. And so, by way of people in Jerusalem, they have not seen Jesus since He raised Lazarus from the dead. But what they have seen, and what has been going on, is the religious leaders are moving about with the people, saying, “Do you know where Jesus is? Have you found Jesus? Have you seen Jesus, because if you see Him, you need to tell us, because we’re going to arrest Him. And if you don’t tell us, you’re going to be part of the problem.” So, they are anxiously looking for Jesus. Everyone knows it. Everyone’s getting excited about it because they want to see Him too, because they want to see what He’s going to do next. The religious leaders are trying to find Him.

And you can read about that started at verse 55 through the end of chapter 11, where it says emphatically—and I’ll read it now to you, just to show you the intensity of what’s going on. In that reality, it says, “*Now the Passover of the Jews*” —that’s where we’re at— “*was at hand, and many went out from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. They were looking*” —here it is— “*for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, ‘What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?’*” Now, why are they asking this? Because of what the Pharisees were saying. And the next verse in John says, “*Now the chief priests and the Pharisees were giving orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.*” Everyone knows what’s going on; everybody knows what’s happening. If Jesus shows up, that’s the end of Jesus, and they’re wondering, “What will He do? Will He show up for Passover? Will He show up for the festival?”

Now, that’s what’s going on in Jerusalem, with the crowds that are amassing in Jerusalem. Where’s Jesus? What’s going on? But you have been tracing and

following with me, with another crowd, with the crowds that have been following Jesus since Perea. And we've been tracing with Mark from the north country. So, what happened about eight weeks earlier, after He heals Lazarus, and He goes up to Ephraim, He then leaves and He goes north, all the way up into Galilee, crosses the Jordan, goes up into Perea, and that's where we've been in Mark. We've been up in Perea, where He did the transfiguration and all of that, and then, He turns and starts coming back down to Jerusalem. And that's where we've been, on the other side of the Jordan. And then, He crosses over on this side of the Jordan and He makes His way towards Jericho, and that's what we saw last week, where He healed the blind men. Blind Bartimaeus specifically is what we looked at last week. And you'll know from Luke 19, where that's at the same time where He goes to Zaccheus.

Right now, the crowds are so large, by this time—we saw it last week, with blind Bartimaeus, where blind Bartimaeus is having to shout over the crowds because there's so many that are hovering around Christ as He's moving, by making His way to Jerusalem. As the text says, sets His "face like a flint" to go to the cross at the perfect time. So, He's heading that direction, and blind Bartimaeus is screaming because they crowds are so loud, by the time they make it into Jericho. The crowds are so loud that Zaccheus can't even see Jesus. Remember, he has to climb up the tree just to get to Jesus, because he wants to see, "Is this really the one?" So, the point you need to get is these crowds are massive.

So, you got this large group, you know, likely by the time it's all said and done, millions of people, probably close to two million that will assemble in Jerusalem for Passover. So, you've got these massive crowds that are coming to Jerusalem early to prepare for Passover. They're starting to wonder. They're anticipating Christ coming. They're wondering, "I think He's going to show up." It's the hub, everyone talking about it. And then you got the crowd that's traveling concurrently with Christ, and they're all talking about not simply Lazarus, but even what they've seen right then and there, with blind Bartimaeus, and now Jesus eating with tax collectors and essentially bringing salvation to a tax collector's home. These crowds are anxious; they're excited. They can't stop talking about it. They can't stop wondering what's going to go on.

And then, in the background, are the Pharisees seeking to arrest Jesus. That's the mood. That's the anticipation. That's what you've got to know when you come to this text. You can't just think that Jesus is just out, you know, for a stroll. "Hey, I think it's time to go to Jerusalem, guys. Let's go." People are after Him, to kill Him. Everybody knows it. And so, will He show up? Because, if He shows up, His time is short at best. So, how will He show up? Will He slide in in secrecy, go through the back door? All of a sudden, hocus pocus, boom! There He is in the temple? Or will He make a grand entrance. And if you're following along in the text, with the mood and the context, the last thing you would expect Jesus to do is make a grand entrance. He has not made a grand entrance in anything that He's done, right? He's been in secrecy. It's the secrecy motif of Mark, where He literally is telling everybody "Be quiet. Be quiet. Be quiet." The last thing anybody expects is for Jesus to proclaim Himself and display Himself as the ultimate King. And yet that's exactly what Jesus does. And there's so much for us to learn now, in John chapter 12.

We were contextually in John 11. In John chapter 12, it says that it was six days when Jesus made it to Bethany, where Lazarus had been raised. And we know from the rest of John, and even what we'll see in Mark 14, that they threw a dinner for Jesus, a dinner where Simon the leper seems to be the host. And Lazarus and Mary and Martha and everybody's there. And it's likely Friday, Friday or Saturday, that they arrive here, in Bethany, just outside of Jerusalem. Jesus stops in Bethany. Now, what did I just say? Jesus was being followed and He was traveling with massive crowds. These massive crowds don't stop in Bethany. They go where? They go on to Jerusalem. And they meet the other crowds and what are they talking about? Jesus. They're talking all about everything they've seen. They're talking all about, "Jesus is coming. Jesus is here. He's just outside the city, in Bethany."

Now you have the mood. Are you with me? Okay, that wasn't very strong. I feel like I didn't do a very good job. You're not encouraging your pastor now. Have I lost you? ... Okay, there you go; that's a little bit better. Oh, come on, man. Come on, Owen. This is your last Sunday. Come on, there you go. It's the last time I get to hear that powerful 'Amen!', right? Come on, brother, I'm giving you a soft pitch softball, right there. Hit it out of the park! Encourage your pastor, here. Alright, you're with me. There you go.

Here we are. I know that took time, but again, we breeze through this story and we don't understand, or we don't stop to understand, really, what's going on. Now, what this story is all about—I've said it multiple times just for clarity. I always give you the point of the passage even before we preach the passage. And I do that every week, just to show you the clarity and repeat it and repeat it. And the point of this passage is really clear. The point of the story, the whole reality of the triumphal entry is that Jesus is making the clearest statement ever, the clearest statement to date, without question, the most serious statement, the clearest statement, the most sovereign, sober statement that He *is* the Messiah, the King of Israel. Jesus is publicly and sovereignly making this massive statement about Himself. And we must see this clearly, if we're rightly going to understand Christ as the King. And that's why Mark is putting this in the text and helping his audience, and thereby helping us understand that Jesus is the King.

Therefore, with that backdrop set, I want us to work through this story and I want to simply see three facets of the triumphal entry that display, undeniably, Jesus Christ as King. Okay, three facets that display Jesus Christ as King. Again, the point of the story, unequivocally, is displaying that He is the King, and we're going to see that from three different angles. Here's three words. Number one: the plan, the plan. You're going to see that in the first six verses. And then, you're going to see the praise. That's in verses 7 to 10. And then, that last verse—you might be wondering why that's even there—you're going to see it, the perception, verse 11. You're going to see the King's plan in verses 1 to 6; you're going to see the King's praise in verses 7 to 10; and you're going to see the King's perception in verse 11. All of these are demonstrating He is the King, a king like no other, a king who's different than all others, the King who was coming.

The first aspect of the triumphal entry that displays Christ as the Messiah is the King's plan. Now, don't miss it. Don't miss it: Mark spends the bulk of this story—this is for those of you who are in the hermeneutics class, those of you men who are studying to rightly study the Word of God, rightly cut it straight. If you're studying and you're observing and you're watching this, it should take your breath away.

The triumphal entry, right, this is the time when Christ manifests Himself in public as the King. And what does Mark spend the bulk of this passage telling us about? Are you ready? The donkey. You have to look at this passage and go, “Mark, really? Like you’re going to spend literally—” He’s going to spend six verses telling us literally how Jesus gets the donkey. The details that you and I probably read through and just think, “Okay.” Mark wants us to see something here. It’s fascinating; it’s interesting. It should stop you and go, “What in the world?” It’s not wasted effort. It’s not meaningless information. Mark has a reason for this, and it’s very important, so I don’t want you to miss that; I want you to let that set in. I want you to see it and savor it.

But, before we consider those details, look at the beginning of verse 1. The text says, “*Now in the day they drew near to Jerusalem to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives.*” Stop right there. That’s the context here. That’s where they are. Mark is giving us the setting for where this whole event is going to take place, where this whole event begins, which is really outside of Jerusalem in and around these two villages, these two cities located on the Mount of Olives. Bethany and Bethphage would have been about two miles from Jerusalem. Bethany, as you probably are well aware, I pray, is the hometown of Christ’s close friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, along with the man, Simon the leper (who we’ll learn about in Luke 14). The village of Bethany is very close to Jerusalem, like I said, only really less than two miles away. This is not the Bethany beyond the Jordan that you read about in John 1:28, where John the Baptist was baptizing people. Do not be confused by that. That’s why, in John 1:28, it says, “*Bethany beyond the Jordan.*” it’s not the same Bethany. These two villages or cities, Bethany and Bethphage—Bethphage, only mentioned here—were located on the southeast slope of the Mount of Olives.

The Mount of Olives was a two-mile ridge that ran parallel to the city, directly across from the temple mount. Actually, it ran parallel to the city of Jerusalem. As a matter of fact, the Mount of Olives is actually higher than the city by about almost 300 feet. So, you actually, when you left the city, you went up to the Mount of Olives. When you were on the Mount of Olives, you were at the highest peak of the whole region, and you could see everything and even see down into the city. The Mount of Olives is a very important part of God’s plan, on multiple levels. It comes

up in Scripture more than most of know. It is a very important place in the Scriptures and the plan of God. Jesus makes His clearest public display as King on this mount. Jesus will ascend back to heaven from this mount. You can see that in Luke 24: 50 to 51 and Acts 1:12.

And, dear loved ones, I don't know if you know this, but when Jesus Christ returns, guess where He will go. He will go right bac to this mount (Zechariah 14:4). There is more that's going on chronologically in the sovereign plan of God when He stops at Bethany and Bethphage and says, "Now's the time." This is on the map, the GPS, of God in the sovereign timetable of His plan. The Mount of Olives is a serious waypoint. It is a stopping point, big time. And so, there's much that's going on here, that that is more than just a location. It is a sovereignly planned, theologically driven place that we don't want to miss. This even is serious and sober; it's the serious and sober statement that "I am King." And Jesus will begin to unfold, now, His sovereign plan.

And so, the text says He calls two disciples and He begins setting this plan into motion. So again, we're going to see the King's plan. He's got a plan. That's the point that Mark is making. Jesus has got a plan. He's got a serious plan not only here, before for all time. And so, we see He calls two disciples to put his plan into motion. Now, we don't know who these two disciples are, but I can tell you almost emphatically, that one of them is Peter. And we can know that because we see details in the plan that only Peter probably would have known, because Peter is the one who disciples Mark, and Mark is writing the memoirs of Peter, and he's giving us details, when they go and they see the donkey tied up at the door, that only an eyewitness would have known. And so, we're pretty confident that one of them was Peter. And the other was probably John. And the reason why I say that is because if you go over and look at Luke 22:8, Jesus calls two disciples another time, a few days later, to do something special for Him, another plan, and that was to make preparations for the Passover. And those two disciples were Peter and John. So, there's good reason for us to think that it's probably those, but the text does not give us their names specifically.

Now, let's look at this plan in detail. That's the setting. The plan is now about to go into motion. And now, we're at verse 2 and now, we're going to see this plan. I

want to see three aspects of this plan. I want you to see the clarity, the certainty, and the authority of this plan, the plan of the King. Notice the clarity of the plan. The King gives clear instructions to these two men. He gives them clear instructions on where they are to go. He literally points—He’s probably just outside of Bethany. They probably have stayed the night. As I was saying, based upon John 12, they probably stayed the night, they had a meal. They were there, if they came in on Friday, they probably hung out there for the Sabbath and now it’s likely Sunday morning, or Sunday afternoon. And they’ve left Bethany and they’re making preparations to go in. And there He is: He’s outside of Bethany, likely pointing to Bethphage, likely pointing to the village. He looks at the two men and He tells them specifically, “I need you to their into that village.” He gives them clarity on where they’re supposed to go. He points them in the right direction. Not only does He tell them where they are to go, but exactly where they are to look, as Jesus explains, “As soon as you get into the village, you’re going to find a colt, a donkey.” Not only where they should go, but even where they should look immediately. “Don’t go walking around the village. Don’t go to the back of the village, the side of the village. As soon as you enter, you’re going to see a colt.” Not only that, He gives them specifically what this colt will look like and what the colt it, not simply a donkey, but one that has never been ridden and one that is tied up. These are specific details. The clarity of the plan is undeniable.

This is an extremely clear plan, but not only that. I want you to notice the certainty of the plan. The certainty is partially seen in how clear it is, but also the emphatic nature of Christ’s instructions. He does not say, “I think there’s a donkey in this village. I heard one when we were walking by the other day. I think there’s one here that we can use. Go in there and look around for it.” No. “There is a donkey. You will find a colt, specifically this colt that has never been ridden.” It is certain. Notice He says, “When you get to the village, look immediately and you will find the donkey tied up.” It’s emphatic. There is no sense of probability in this plan, only sovereign certainty. I love the sovereign certainty of Christ seen in the next statement. Look at it: “Untie the donkey and bring it.” Like, “Hey, if you find one, we could really use it now”? Like kind of motivating them to, you know, “Don’t you guys want to please me? Go find me a donkey. I think there’s one here”? No. “You’re going to find one. When you find it, and you will, untie it and bring it.” No questions about anything, just “Bring it.”

Furthermore, Jesus is not only certain in what they will find, but also what He will do with it. Jesus has a clear plan that will involve this donkey, but only for a short while. Jesus knows what He's doing. He's got a plan because He's going to go on and tells them, "Right, if somebody asks you about it, tell them, 'Don't worry about it,' because I'm going to bring it right back shortly, quickly." He knows what He's doing. This plan is certain and, evidently, nobody's going to stop Him in this plan, because He's confident that He'll be able to return it to the owners.

You see the clarity of the plan, the certainty of the plan; now look at the authority. Jesus says, "Listen, if you're in there and someone sees you untying the donkey, this is what you say." Now imagine this: some of you go out and you jump in somebody else's car as you're leaving church. That's—yeah, you're going to say, "Hey, buddy, I love you, but that's not your car! Brother in Christ, that's not your donkey." You can get the picture. And Jesus is like, you know, just saying, "If somebody says anything to you, if you're asked any questions, make sure you tell them the Lord needs it." Look at the authority of what He's telling them. "Don't worry about. Don't get upset. Don't be scared. Just untie the donkey and bring it, and if anybody stops you, just tell them the Lord needs it. Don't give them the details of the plan. You don't have to explain it." Listen, He doesn't even tell them why the Lord needs it. And He'll bring it back quickly; He'll bring it back immediately, shortly. This is a plan with much authority.

By now, you should see, without question, that this plan is clear, this plan is certain, this plan comes with much authority. Now, you can see the authority in the rest of the passage. Verses 4 to 6, what happens? Exactly what Jesus said would happen, and that's what Mark is showing us. So, "*they went away and found*" what? "*A colt tied at a door.*" That's Peter giving us a little bit more information in the street. And they untied it just as Jesus said and just as they're starting to walk away with somebody else's donkey, the owners—that's what Luke tells us, it was the owners that said, "Hey, where are you going with the donkey?" And they say, even in the parallel account of Luke, all they say is "The Lord needs it," and they let them go. It says here that they said exactly what Jesus told them to say, and the owners let them go. Again, the authority of the plan. You can't miss it.

Now, what's going on here? Why in the world does Mark spend six verses describing all these details surrounding how Jesus gets this donkey? Mark is wanting his audience to notice, once again, how Christ is sovereignly in control of everything and everywhere and everyone around Him. He has a sovereign plan and He's providentially working out His plan undeniably. Jesus did not stumble upon the right circumstances, and it was just kind of like "Wow, this is a movement. We better, you know, like jump onto the movement and take of this," like so many political leaders, right? They're just like doing their thing, and then nothing's happening. All of a sudden, a movement happens and they just kind of ride the wave into their political office. That is not what's going on here with Jesus. There's no way happening. Jesus is creating the wave. Everything is being orchestrated by Him. That's what Mark is wanting us to see, down the very details of the donkey. Mark is doing what he's been doing since the beginning of this gospel account. He's showing us, once again, that there is no one like Jesus. No one can do what Jesus does. No one can say what Jesus says. Jesus says the Lord needs it and people respond. No one can do that.

Now, you'll know, I pray, that Zechariah 9:9, what I asked Dave to read this morning, is exactly what Jesus is doing. He is orchestrating this whole event. He has sovereignly planned out everything, down to the moment it happens, so that He fulfills Zechariah 9:9. *"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."* Here, Christ is sovereignly orchestrating every detail that He might fulfill this prophecy and, in so doing, make the most explicit claim to His messiahship. That is exactly what Matthew 21:4 says about this moment, that He's doing it to fulfill Zechariah 9:9. There is no louder declaration made by Jesus that He was the Christ than right here.

Jesus is saying, with no confusion, "I am the King." David rode on a donkey, and Solomon rode on a donkey when he was hailed king. You can read about that in 1 Kings 32 to 48. Actually, Solomon rode on David's donkey. That was David's encouragement to him when he, when Solomon, finally became king. This reality of a colt never being ridden, you can read about this reality of animals that were never use for commercial use, never being a beast of burden, never having a yoke put on them, never having a person ride them. These animals were the ones that

were used for sacrifice. These animals were the ones that were used for holy, separate purposes. You can read about that in Numbers 19:2; Deuteronomy 21:3; 1 Samuel 6:7. Jesus is showing that this isn't just a donkey; this is a special donkey, orchestrated, planned out just for Him. The timing of everything is being planned out in every single detail, by Christ. He will ride this special donkey, on this special day, at this special time to show everyone that He is special. He's unlike any other.

It is no accident that Jesus orchestrates this on the Mount of Olives, none whatsoever. He doesn't come from the other side of Jerusalem. He doesn't come from the south. He doesn't come from the north. He doesn't come from the west. He comes from the east, where the Mount of Olives is, and that's no accident, because of Zechariah 14:4 says when Jesus comes back, He will return to this mount as the King of glory who will reign on the earth. And if you really want to blow your mind, you should go to Daniel chapter 9, verses 24 to 26, and you should read the prophecy of Daniel, talking about the 70 weeks of Daniel, and how this week, matter of fact, this day, was prophesied by Daniel. And Jesus is fulfilling it, down to the very day that He rides into Jerusalem. This is no joke. This is no small matter. Jesus is orchestrating every minute of this event.

Now, some of you may say, "Well yeah, but Jesus, He prearranged this, right? Like He got on His cellphone and He texted a bunch of people said 'Hey, I hear you got a donkey that's never been ridden. Can I borrow it? I can Venmo you for, you know, ten minutes on your donkey or something.'" Maybe that's where you're at, and you're just like, "Well, He prearranged this. He just sent some disciples ahead." He may have. I don't know. But, when I read this, I don't see a prearrangement. I see a sovereign orchestration. But, even if He prearranged it, the point remains the same. Mark's point is this, even if He prearranged it—matter of fact, if you say He prearranged it, you actually build more to the case. He is emphatically making sure that everything happens the way He wants it to happen. He's in control of it all. So, whether He did it by way of prearrangement—which, again, I don't know when that would have happened because He's not in Bethany for all that time. Would've been interesting. And the way the owners are like shocked when somebody's untying their donkey. But, even if that's the case, it doesn't take away Mark's point. This King is planning this all out. The disciples know nothing about it. They're not a part of it. This is all His doing. He has a plan and that plan itself shows that He is the King

of glory. He knows that He is in fulfillment. He knows that He is—Zechariah 9:9—the Messiah coming. So many people in apologetics will say Jesus never claimed to be the King of Israel. Are you kidding me? Absolutely He did.

Now, you may be saying, “Wow, you’re really driving this point.” Yes, I am. Because Mark did. He spent six verses on it, right? I need to be honest with the text. He spends more times with this than he does with the “Hosannas.” And this is why: because this King has a plan. And, dear loved ones, you’re sitting there going, “Okay, I get it.” No, no, you don’t get it. You don’t get it. Hear me when I say that. Let me tell you how you don’t get it.

Do you worry? Raise your hand: “Yes, I worry.” Do you get anxious? “Yes, I get anxious.” Do you get fearful? “Yes, I get fearful.” I know that. Can I tell you why? Because you don’t believe Christ has a plan. You don’t know that Christ has a plan. What we’re watching right here, in this moment, is not anything special. This is how Christ works. This is what He does. We’re just getting a zoomed-in snapshot of this moment. But this isn’t the only time that Christ works out a plan. This isn’t—listen, this is the plan. Christ, He lives the plan. He is the plan. The plan never stopped. This is just one little thing. “Oh, look, that was a great day Christ, Christ the King, served and worked out His plan.” Not at all. This plan has been going on. Christ only works within the sovereign plan of God. Everything happens within His perfect plan. This is how God works. This is how Christ works. We’re getting a little snippet into the King’s administration. This is how our King administers His kingdom. This is how our King serves His people. This is how our King over-shepherds us and orchestrates our lives. This is what it’s like. This is so vital, that we learn that our God and our King has a sovereign plan that’s over all. And if we can get that, it changes everything, everything about your life. There is nothing that comes into your life that is outside of God’s plan. Do you understand that? This is so important and so huge, and we just breeze right by it and miss it.

Listen, Jesus Christ was said to be what? The lamb slain before the foundation of the world. How can that be? Revelation 13:8: because He’s got a plan. God has a plan, and His Son is the point, and it’s been that way from the beginning. And the plan is not done. The plan isn’t finished. The plan, in some ways, is just getting started. And you, if you’re a believer, are part of the plan. As a matter of fact, this

morning is a part of the plan. God does nothing outside of the plan, nothing haphazard, nothing crazy.

Remember that when you get worried about Joe Biden, okay? Or Kamala Harris or any of the other politicians that have lost their minds. Next time you go there—no, for real—next time, stop. Stop worrying about it. Because, in some way, either by judgement or by grace, God has them in His plan. You understand that, right? That will take the anxiety of Election Day away from you. And I've seen it every year. It frustrates me and it saddens me at the same time. Elections roll around, and everybody gets excited and worked up. And I'm always like, "Why don't we get excited and worked up like that over evangelism?" When was the last time you got excited about that over your unsaved neighbor? But whoever's going to be the next president or vice president or whatever, and we're just like "Oh, what's going to happen?" I don't know, but God's got a plan. I don't have to worry about it. You see how this works. You see how encouraging this is.

Imagine—here you go, you guys in Hermeneutics. The audience of Mark. It's not just about the details of the text. It's about the audience. Why is Mark writing this? Why is Mark spending all this time about the plan? Who needed to know that Christ is the King of the plan. The audience that Mark is writing to, the Gentiles in Rome [during] the persecution of Nero, as they're Christians in Rome trying to figure this out. And this is the King we're following. And Mark's like, "Yeah, the King who's got the whole thing under His plan. Even right now, your persecutions and your pain and your suffering, they're under the plan. He's got it. If He can orchestrate the donkey on the day, He's got you under control." So important to see that.

Listen, dear loved ones. Genesis 3:15, the plan started before the foundation of the world, and then it comes in, right? Genesis 3:15, the seed of the woman is going to crush the serpent. That's part of the plan. That's the foundation to the plan. Genesis 22:4, Isaac and Abraham on the mountain. What does Abraham say? "On this mountain, the Lord will provide," when he's about ready to kill his son, Isaac, right? You remember that. Do you know where that mountain is? That mountain is Jerusalem. That is where Christ will be slain. He is the provision of the Lord. This is the plan. It was going all along. Genesis 22 isn't simply about Abraham and Isaac. It's about us. It's about the coming Christ, who the Father will not stop the knife

from going into, His Son, as He did with Abraham. He will thrust it into His Son, as Isaiah 53 says. And He will provide exactly what we need, the sacrificial lamb. This plan has been going on.

It doesn't stop. Genesis 49:9 through 10 makes it really clear. We know that the Son is coming. We know that the Son and the Father are going to be doing something. Get to Genesis 49, we know the Son, the seed, by this point, is going to be from the tribe of Judah. The plan is getting really clear. Genesis 49 says the King will come from Judah. Boom. Wow. Now, we're really getting into the plan. The plan keeps going. Exodus 12 makes it clear that the plan, that the Savior will be a lamb. He will be a lamb slain, the Passover Lamb. Exodus 17 shows us that the King will be the Rock, the Rock that travels with Israel and provides for them, as it says in 1 Corinthians 10. Leviticus 8:9 says the King will be a priest, the Priest to shepherd His people and provide for them and teach them. Leviticus 16 says that the King is going to be scapegoat. He's going to be the atoning sacrifice for His people. Deuteronomy 18 says the King's going to be the prophet by which the people—

Listen! Joshua chapter 5 says the King's going to be the warrior for Israel. Thirty-one nation states, 31 kings: "Joshua, with your pitchforks and your farm utensils, go over there and conquer those kingdoms." Joshua's like, "Okay, how are we going to do that?" In Joshua chapter 5, who does he meet? What we sang about today: the Lord of hosts. He meets the commander of the King's army. Who is that? That's Christ. He meets Christ. Joshua chapter 5 says, "I'm going with you. See me? It's good." It's part of the plan. None of this is by accident. This is the plan. How many times we read the Bible, you're like "Wow, that's really amazing. Man! Fate, karma" Nonsense! Sovereignty, that's what we're talking about.

That continues, 2 Samuel chapter 7, right here. The plan will involve a king, the promised King of David, who will sit on the throne of David forever. That's what we're seeing. Isaiah 9: the King's going to come through a virgin, and He will be King. Isaiah 9 makes that clear. Zechariah 9:9 says, and when that King is presented, He will ride in on a donkey. Do you see how this all works? This is amazing. This is awesome.

Galatians 4:4 speaks of this plan working out in the perfect time. Acts 2, Peter declares emphatically that God was working everything according to His eternal plan, even when Christ was crucified. Ephesians 3:4 speaks about the unifying nature of the plan. Colossians 1 speaks about the cosmic reconciliation that's going to come on the universe, still future because of the Son's death. Romans 8 and Romans 9 speak of the unspeakable nature of the plan for true Israel and every true believer.

The triumphal entry, unlike any other earthly event in Christ's life, displays how clearly He is sovereignly working out God's eternal plan, further proving He is the eternal Son of God. Do you see that? We must learn, dear loved ones, to revel and rest in the eternal plan of God, instead of being anxious over our plans. Christ has a plan He's working out for every single believer. Ephesians 1: 3 to 4 makes that undeniably clear. He saved you to make you holy. That's the whole purpose of His plan, to make you like Christ, and God has a plan, and He never ever stops working His plan. So that is, if He saved you, He will make you holy, which is exactly what Romans 8:28 to 39 say emphatically, what Hebrews 7:25, 10 to 14, 10 and 11 show. How serious this sovereign plan is for Christ. He didn't just work on this day. In Hebrews 7, it says He never stops interceding for His own. Why? That they might ultimately be saved. He's working His plan right now. Right now, He's praying for you and praying for me, even as I preach. He's praying for me to praise the Lord.

Philippians 1:6 gives us the promise of the plan: He that began a good work in you will finish it. He started it and He will finish it. Philippians 2:12 through 13 makes it clear and encourages us with our duty in His sovereign plan—let that set in—where we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that He's at work. There you go. Philippians 3:8 through 14 is encouraging, because then we see that plan is to make us like Christ. Listen, to the surety of God's plan in this passage, in 1 Peter chapter 5, verses 10 and 11: *"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore you, confirm you, strengthen and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen."* How can he say that? Because He has a plan for your life. It's not what you think. It's not to make you materially prosperous, give you fine suits and more cars, despite what many preachers will tell you today. God's plan is to make you holy. And the only way that involves your happiness is when

you understand that holiness is the best thing for you. God doesn't care about your happiness; He cares about your holiness. And your holiness, when you align your mind with Christ, will be your greatest happiness. That's how that works.

The King's praise, verses 7 to 10. *"And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and other spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!'"*

Here's the second part. You saw the King's plan, now look at the King's praise. They are clearly beginning, now, to praise Him, both by what they do, in their cloaks and their branches, and what they say. Notice how the text says they threw their cloaks on the donkey for a saddle. Here's Jesus now—let the prosperity gospel preachers have fun with this. Jesus doesn't roll in in a Hummer or a Cadillac. He comes in on a borrowed donkey without a saddle. I wish they'd preach that. I wish they'd show up at church sometimes like that. It's not even His donkey, and it doesn't even have a saddle. They've got to us coats for a saddle. Nonsense that we have to be around; it's ludicrous.

They threw their cloaks on the road, establishing, if you will, in many ways, their own red carpet. Jesus is majestic. He is the King. It's like His majesty is so great that they don't even want him to walk on the dirt, so they're throwing their coats; they're throwing branches; they're doing anything they can to pave a highway for Him. Throwing their cloaks on the ground was a sign of humility, that they were willing to serve and follow the King, and they will even give their own possessions, their own cloaks, to pave a road for Him.

You can see the same reality in 2 Kings 9:13, with Israel, when Jehu was declared to be king, they did the same exact thing. They all threw their cloaks; they threw stuff on the road as he was declared to be king. You could see the same reality in heaven. You go back later and read Revelation 7:9, and it talks about the adoration of the King and the praise of the King that goes on, day and night, without stop. And guess what it says. They're waving their palm branches in heaven.

Notice how the text is clear. Why does everything change? Jesus doesn't stop them. He doesn't say, "Hey, keep it down. Pharisees might hear us." Actually, the Pharisees were there. We see that in Luke's account. Again, everything has changed because now the time has come, unlike when He told His mother—remember at the very beginning of His ministry, in the early Judean ministry, when He turned the water into wine. And He said, "Woman, my time has not come. Why are you asking me to do this?" Now, He has no hesitation. He lets them sing His praises without any stopping. Don't miss it. As he's riding into Jerusalem, they're heralding "Hosanna!" Hosanna literally means "Save us now! Save us now!" And it probably, by that time, came to have a general meaning of "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!" They're so excited because they see in Christ the coming King, the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, the Davidic King who would sit on the throne forever. Don't miss it.

Over in Luke chapter 19, verses 30 and 40, the Pharisees are watching this and they see it as blasphemy. They understand. This is how clear the crowds were. They're like, "They're calling you 'King.' They think you're the Messiah. Tell them to stop." They literally say, "Rebuke them. Teacher, rebuke them." You know what Jesus says? "Oh no, if they stop, the rocks would cry out." And why would the rocks cry out in that moment? Are you ready? Because it's part of the plan. This has been the moment that everything has been moving towards. This wasn't, "Well, you know, it's going to rain next week, boys. Let's move that back. Gabriel, let's move it back another week. We're not sure about that. That angel over weather is going to have to get on that." This was the day! Go back and look at Daniel 9. This was the day it was all moving [toward]. You couldn't stop [it]. That's what Jesus is saying. "If you stop them, the rocks are going to cry out because I am the eternal Son of God, the King of glory. And I'm here on earth. You can't stop this." Marvelous. This is our King. This is glorious.

Don't miss it, dear loved ones. You've read this so many times and maybe you got this, maybe you didn't. Notice, does Jesus walk to Jerusalem? No, He rides. But guess what. He's the only one who rides. Everyone that went to Jerusalem for the Passover or the festivals, about a mile or two out of Jerusalem, they all got off their donkeys, their horses, their carts, and they walked to Jerusalem. No one rode to

Jerusalem because, as it says in the Hallel Psalms of praise, starting in Psalm 113 to Psalm 118, they would walk up to Jerusalem, and they would be praising God and singing the praise songs as they were heading up to Jerusalem. And that's exactly what they're doing, because they're quoting Psalm 118 in this moment. They're literally seeing—and I want you to turn over there, because I don't want you to miss this.

Turn over to Psalm 118. This is what they're saying, this is what they're praising, they're praying, they're quoting, as they say this in Psalm 118. They're all off their carts, they're all walking and praising the Lord, and Jesus is the only one [riding]. Think of the focus, think of the intensity. Everyone is walking and Jesus is riding because He's the King. Psalm 118 would have been the last of the Psalms of praise that they would have been praying and singing as they're going up. Because you come out of Bethany, which is on the Mount of Olives, and then you go down into a steep valley. It's called the Valley of Kidron, the Kidron Valley. And so, they go down into the steep valley, and then they go back up into Jerusalem. And so that's why so many of these Psalms talk about going *up* to Jerusalem. They're singing these songs as they're traveling up into the city, and Psalm 119 is what they're saying.

I want to start in verse 19. You can imagine them going towards the city. The city's in sight. *“Open the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.”* Look, verse 22: *“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”* There's Christ. He's the cornerstone, riding on the donkey. *“This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”* They're not saying that—you know, you're sick and feel like you've got the flu, and you're just like “This is the day the Lord has made. I'll rejoice and be glad in it.” I get it, if you say that to encourage yourself. Keep doing that. But you're using it out of context. *This is the day that the Lord has made. The King has come. The King is here.* They are going into Jerusalem. This is the day that the Lord has made.

And now you see what they're saying. Verse 25: *“Hosanna! Save us, we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the*

Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord. The Lord is God, and he has made his light to shine on us.” Now, look at the next phrase. This is so amazing. *“Bind the festal sacrifice with cords up to the horns of the altar!”* What are they doing? This is what they’re praying at Passover. They’re saying “Bring the lamb. Bring the sacrifice. Tie him to the altar. We’re going to slay him for the sins.” Here’s the Lamb walking in! They’re all praising the Lord: “Here it is! This is the day!” And the Lamb is going in to be tied to the altar. The Lamb is going in to be, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5:7, the Passover lamb. Christ is not simply being praised as the King. Christ is promoting Himself as the festival sacrifice. He is going in, just as He said a few verses earlier, Mark 10:45, that He has not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom payment for many. And that’s what He’s doing. And that’s where He’s going. That’s the plan.

And that’s the praise, and now look at the last verse, back in Mark 11. I kind over wonder why this verse is here. *“And he entered Jerusalem,”* verse 11, *“and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.”* You’ve seen the King’s plan; you’ve seen the King’s praise. Just look for a moment at the King’s perception, what He’s doing. Very interesting.

Mark—and we’ll see this when we get to the end—Mark’s done this multiple times, and I love this about his writing style. Mark loves to be—are you ready? — anticlimactic. Is this not anticlimactic? All the praise, all the pomp, and the circumstance, it’s all gone. Where’s everybody at? Literally, it’s like He walks in the temple, and everybody’s gone. It’s like it’s barren. There’s nobody there. He just looks around at what’s going on. There’s nothing that’s going on. It’s all passed. And Mark is doing that to sober his audience. Be careful that you don’t think too much of this crowd too soon. Be careful, because they have praised Him now, but they’re going to crucify Him at the end of the week. Mark has a way of doing this, and you’re going to see it, even before we get done the book, multiple times, especially how the book ends. When it ends, rightfully at verse 6, and it leaves you in shock and awe. And Mark has a way of doing that to make you think. And here it’s like “Why? What’s going on?”

Well, I'll tell you. This sets us up for what's coming next, what comes next, because of the sovereign King's perception. Jesus is looking. He knows what's going on, and He's not happy. What has happened with the temple, it has become a commercial market of lies and deception, thievery and abuse, and He's looking around at it. But notice He doesn't clear the temple right then. He goes home for the night, goes back to Bethany, no doubt to the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, spends the night, and He gets up the next morning and what does He do? He comes and He cleans house.

It's very interesting when you understand the flow of this, because you can never charge Christ with an emotional outburst of anger. The King's perception: He's watching it all. He's look at it all. He's taking notes. Here you go: He's storing up His wrath in this moment. "I'll come back tomorrow. I'll take care of this." He's not like you. He's not like me. We'd have made the whip of cords. We'd have pulled out the M16. We'd have done all kinds of things in that moment, and it would have been sinful. Not Christ. He is a man of self-control. Here you go: why? Because He's a man on a plan, a sovereign plan. If you read Luke 19 later, in correlation to this, He weeps. He weeps because He knows--

I've often, in my mind, titled this section, this story, not "The Triumphal Entry" but "The Not-So Triumphal Entry". Because, in the end, it's fake, by way of the response of the crowd, isn't it? Faithful on the response of Christ, but fake on the response of so many in the crowd. And that's why He weeps bitterly, because they will reject Him, and they will not accept Him. For all their excitement, they will turn on Him. And how sad that was.

You've seen the King's plan; you've seen the King's praise; you've seen the King's perception. What do we learn from this? Emphatically, Jesus is the King. Zechariah 9:9 fulfilled so clearly. What Mark started in his gospel, when he said Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and he goes right into the prophecies about the Son of God being the Messiah, now we see that emphatically, undeniably, He is the King. We also see clearly that Jesus is coming into Jerusalem to be the Passover sacrifice. We saw it in Mark 10:45, where Jesus declared it. Now, He's doing it. He's setting everything in motion, to where He came in at just the right day. Interesting to go back and look in Exodus, of when the lamb had to be brought into the house. Just saying, you

might want to look that up later and investigate that. By the timing of Christ entering Jerusalem so that the lamb could be investigated. Christ will serve as the Passover sacrifice, and He's putting it all into motion at just the right time so that He will be sacrificed on the cross at the same exact time that the lambs are being slaughtered.

Listen, you couldn't do that if you tried. And what we'll find out is the Pharisees, they had a plan to not kill Him during the Passover because they were afraid of what it would do to the crowd. And what do they end up doing? Killing Him during the Passover. Why? Because the King is working His plan. Can't stop it, can't thwart it. The other side of this, that is a healthy reminder, is that the King is coming back. Zechariah 14, the King will come back to the same spot, and He will split the Mount of Olives in two places when His feet hit it, because He is glorious and He is King over all, and He will rule upon this earth with a rod of iron. He came meek and mild, riding on a donkey, but He is coming back as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, that His very feet, when they hit the earth, create an earthquake that splits the Mount of Olives.

So, what does that tell us? How do you go away from a sermon like this? Too long, no doubt, but hang with me. How do you bring some fruit out of this long sermon? Here you go: you should walk away with understanding that Jesus is a sovereign King. He is not Joe Biden. He is not Caesar. He is Lord of all. Everything is under His control. He is a sacrificial King, one who comes to give His life as a ransom for many. He is a serious King. He soberly evaluates the temple and He's coming back with a whip of cords. He is serious. Our King plays no games. And He is, without question, dear loved ones, a soon-returning King.

Oh, that we would get the triumphal entry rightly and live in light of it. Our world desperately needs it. They need to know this King. While we're being ruled by kings that really don't know anything, they need to see the King of kings and the Lord of lords. And they will see it in us, as we live this out in our homes, in our jobs, and in this church.