

## UP, IN, OUT:

- When we speak of Jesus as King, is this primarily and UP, IN, or OUT statement. Why do you think this?

## OPEN:

- What's the closest you've ever come to being treated like royalty?

## DIG:

Today is going to be a little different. We're going to look at the event known as the Triumphal Entry - when Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey and the people welcome him like a king. This is recorded in each of the four Gospels of the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were all inspired by God to write their Gospels, but they came from different backgrounds, had different audiences in mind, and chose to tell the story of Jesus in different ways. Today, we will try to harmonize the four accounts of the Triumphal Entry and see what we can get out of it. The four accounts can be found in **Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-40, and John 12:12-19.**

- Context: Use the section headings in your Bible to figure out when this is taking place. What is happening in the sections before and after the Triumphal Entry? Why is this important?
- Carefully read the four accounts and make notes of what is included, excluded, and different about each compared to the others.

## REFLECT:

- What questions do you have based on your observations?
- Use study Bible notes or other sources such as commentaries to seek answers to these questions. I have copied in a bunch of commentary notes below these questions. Feel free to use these or use your own.
- What is the main take-away from these passages as far as you are concerned?
- What would be a secondary take-away for you?

## APPLY:

- Based on your study, what do you think God wants you to start, stop, or do differently?
- If you were going to preach a sermon on the Triumphal Entry, which of the four accounts would you choose, and what do you think your main point would be? Come up with this as a group and email this to Nick. Maybe he'll change directions for next Sunday :)

## PRAY:

## Faithlife Study Bible - Matthew 21:1-11

**21:1-11** At the height of messianic fervor, Jesus enters the Holy City amid great pomp and pageantry.

**21:1 Bethphage** Likely located near Bethany on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives.

**Mount of Olives** East of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley. It offers a panoramic view of Jerusalem and the temple. See 2 Sam 15:30; Zech 14:4.

**21:2 the village before you** Refers to Bethphage or perhaps Bethany, which was nearby.

**21:4 the prophet** Refers to Zechariah. The quotation that follows is from Zech 9:9 (compare Isa 62:11).

**21:5 daughter of Zion** Refers to Jerusalem and its inhabitants. See note on Isa 1:8; compare 2 Kgs 19:21; Psa 9:14; Jer 4:31.

Jesus' Fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecy Table

**on a donkey, and on a colt** Zechariah 9:9 refers to the same animal twice, using poetic parallelism.

**21:7 the donkey and the colt** Matthew includes both animals; the other Gospels mention only a colt (Mark 11:1-7; Luke 19:30-35; John 12:14-15). See note on 1 Kgs 1:33.

**put their cloaks on them** The disciples pay homage to their King (see 2 Kgs 9:13).

**he sat on them** Another son of David, Solomon, rode in a similar royal procession (1 Kgs 1:38-40).

**21:8 a very large crowd** This crowd probably consists of peasants, most of whom seem to have accompanied Jesus from Galilee. Unlike the city dwellers who later call for Jesus' death (Matt 27:22-25), these peasants believe that He is the Messiah.

**spread their cloaks on the road** See v. 7 and note.

**spreading them on the road** Part of the crowd's acknowledgment that Jesus was King. Compare 2 Kgs 9:13 and note.

**21:9 Hosanna** This Hebrew expression, meaning "help" or "save us," developed into a liturgical expression of praise.

**the Son of David** A messianic title (see note on Matt 1:1).

**who comes in the name of the Lord** The crowd understood that Jesus was declaring Himself to be the Messiah. Their shouts of praise reflect Psa 118:25-26.

Messianic Psalms Table

**21:10 he entered into Jerusalem** This procession symbolizes Jesus' messiahship.

**21:11 the prophet** This title came to have messianic overtones (compare Deut 18:18).

Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Mt 21:1–11). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

## Faithlife Study Bible - Mark 11:1-11

**11:1–11** As Jesus enters Jerusalem on a colt, many gather to bless Him and hail the return of the Davidic kingdom (compare 2 Sam 7; note on Mark 10:47). The scene is reminiscent of a triumphal, kingly procession, but Jesus does not proceed to act like an earthly king—He does not take military action against occupying Rome or Herod Antipas (compare 6:14). Neither the religious leaders nor the Romans seem to take note of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem until Jesus cleanses the temple (vv. 15–19).

**11:1 Bethphage** A village on the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem.

**Bethany** One of Jerusalem's outlying settlements.

**Mount of Olives** A two-mile-long ridge that forms Jerusalem's eastern border and rises about 300 feet above the city; a site of many olive groves. In the book of Zechariah, the Mount of Olives is the place where God's glory is revealed (Zech 14:1–7).

**11:2 colt** Reflects the OT image and prophecy of Jerusalem's king riding on a donkey (see Zech 9:9 and note; compare 1 Kgs 1:38 and note).

**on which no one has ever sat** Probably an allusion to Zech 9:9, which describes the king's mount as "new."

**11:3 The Lord** This instance of the Greek term, *kyrios*, is likely the common usage to refer to a social superior, meaning something akin to "teacher" or "sir."

**11:5** Kings were known to enter cities in splendor, especially during coronation or after a victorious battle. They may have ridden a chariot pulled by four horses or even elephants and been accompanied by troops. While Jesus does enter as king, His approach is humble—He is not accompanied by soldiers and rides on a borrowed colt. This not only emphasizes Jesus' humility as king, but also reflects the nature of the kingdom of God (compare Matt 21:10 and note).

**11:8 many people spread their cloaks on the road** A public declaration of political allegiance (compare 2 Kgs 9:13). Jesus enters Jerusalem as its king, and the people accept Him as such.

**branches** A common element in festal processions (Lev 23:40).

**11:9 were shouting** They shout an adaptation of Psa 118:25–26, which commemorates God’s victory over foreign armies through His agent (presumably the Davidic king).

**Hosanna** A transliteration of the Hebrew phrase *hoshi'ah na*, which means “save us!” Compare Psa 118:25.

**Blessed is the one who comes** A quotation of Psa 118:26. This announcement happens in response to a display of God’s favor (Psa 118:27).

**11:10 coming kingdom of our father David** Reflects the expectation that the kingdom of David would be restored to Israel, involving someone from David’s line sitting on the throne and the restoration of Israel (see note on Mark 10:47).

**in the highest** Refers to the heavens and their inhabitants (compare Psa 148:1–4).

**11:11 he went into Jerusalem to the temple** This reflects the prophecy of Mal 3:1 (compare Mark 1:2). See note on Matt 21:10.

Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [\*Faithlife Study Bible\*](#) (Mk 11:1–11). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

## Faithlife Study Bible - Luke 19:28-40

**19:28–40** Luke’s travel narrative, which began at 9:51, ends with this passage as Jesus enters Jerusalem (compare Matt 21:1–9; Mark 11:1–10; John 12:12–18). The remainder of Luke’s Gospel recounts the events surrounding Jesus’ death and resurrection.

**19:28 going up to Jerusalem** Refers to the final ascent to the holy city, which was located on a plateau in the Judaeen Mountains.

**19:29 Bethphage and Bethany** Villages on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

**Mount of Olives** The location has prophetic connotations. In the book of Zechariah, the Mount of Olives (on the east side of Jerusalem) is identified as the place where God will take His stand in battle against those who attack His people (Zech 14:4).

**19:32 just as he had told them** Suggests divine arrangement.

**19:35 they put Jesus on it** This scene reflects Zechariah’s image of the king triumphantly returning to Jerusalem from battle (Zech 9:9). This act has messianic connotations: Jesus is riding into Jerusalem as the king of the Jews, in David’s line (see 1 Kgs 1:33 and note).

**19:36 they** Likely refers to the Galilean peasants who followed Jesus to Jerusalem, as opposed to residents of the city.

**spreading out their cloaks** An act of homage. In 2 Kgs 9:13 the people performed this same action when announcing Jehu as the new king of Israel.

**19:38 comes in the name of the Lord** Quoted from Psa 118:26.

**19:39 Pharisees** See note on Luke 5:17.

**rebuke your disciples** The Pharisees recognize the symbolism of Jesus' manner of arrival (see note on v. 35), as well as the messianic overtones in the cries of the crowd. Also, they might have feared that shouts of praise to the king (v. 38) would incite a violent response from the Romans, as it could have been viewed as anti-imperial.

**19:40 the stones will cry out** Jesus alludes to Hab 2:11. His reply to the Pharisees accepts the people's praises as appropriate, implying that He truly is Israel's king who comes in the name of Yahweh.

Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [\*Faithlife Study Bible\*](#) (Lk 19:28–40). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

## **Faithlife Study Bible - John 12:12-19**

**12:13 branches of palm trees** The people make a path for Jesus to enter the city as royalty.

**Hosanna** This Hebrew expression, meaning “help us” or “save us,” developed into a liturgical expression of praise.

**name of the Lord** Jesus comes as a representation of the divine name—as “I am” or Yahweh (compare note on Exod 3:14).

**king of Israel** The people recognize Jesus as their king, though they likely do not understand this vocation in the same way as He does.

**12:15 daughter of Zion** See note on Matt 21:5.

Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [\*Faithlife Study Bible\*](#) (Jn 12:13–15). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

## New American Commentary - Matthew 21:1-11

This account is misnamed the “triumphal” entry. Jesus does appear to be at the zenith of his popularity, even acknowledged as the Messiah, but the crowd shows no appreciation for the suffering and death to which he must soon submit himself. Only five days later, some of these people will clamor for his crucifixion, even if the crowd then is not entirely composed of the same individuals as here. (Probably there will be more Judeans and native Jerusalemites present then than in this procession of mainly Galilean pilgrims just arriving in town for the Passover festival.)

**21:1–3** Bethphage (v. 1) and Bethany (v. 17) were two small villages just to the east of Jerusalem on or near the slopes of the large hill, known as the Mount of Olives, which dominated the skyline of that side of town. Matthew includes the place names to remind his readers how near Jesus is to Jerusalem and perhaps also to evoke the messianic associations of the Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4; see further under 24:3). Jesus is consciously making preparations to enter Jerusalem after the fashion of Zech 9:9, with echoes of Isa 62:11. Zechariah’s prophecy was widely interpreted in rabbinic literature as messianic (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 98.9; *b. Sanh* 98a, 99a; *Qoh. Rab.* 1.9). As again later with their preparation for the Passover (26:18), it is not clear whether the disciples’ rendezvous stems from Jesus’ prior arrangements or from his supernatural insight. “The Lord” is, more literally, *their Lord/Master* and also suggests a double entendre. The disciples will act as if they are servants of the donkey’s owner. If anyone becomes suspicious of their behavior, their reply need mean nothing more than that the owner has asked them to bring him the animals. But Matthew undoubtedly sees Jesus as the true Master, not only of the donkeys but of all people’s property, which he can rightfully demand at any time.

**21:4–5** Matthew follows his favorite practice of inserting fulfillment citations, though a partial parallel occurs in John 12:14–15 as well. Only Matthew mentions two animals. He is often accused of misinterpreting what in the Old Testament was intended to be synonymous parallelism. But irrespective of the correct reading of Zech 9:9, it would be natural for the mother to come along if her colt had never previously been ridden (Mark 11:2). Verse 5 can easily be taken as implying that Jesus rode only on the young donkey, appropriate symbolism for his purity and holiness. “Daughter of Zion” refers to the people of Jerusalem. The “king” will be the Messiah. But an unarmed, plainly clad civilian riding a donkey contrasts sharply with an armed soldier astride a war horse. This Messiah comes in humility, gentleness, and peace. The crowds recognize the messianic implications but seem not to grasp the full significance of the donkey. The fulfillment quotation generally follows the wording of the LXX but omits the lines “Shout, daughter of Jerusalem” (unnecessary repetition) and “righteous and having salvation” (probably because Jerusalem was not now being saved but judged; salvation will come much later).<sup>53</sup>

**21:6–9** The plan goes off without a hitch as the two disciples do as they have been told. They place their cloaks on the animals while the crowd paves the road with theirs, adding tree branches to their festive carpet. John 12:13 refers specifically to palm branches appropriate for a trip from Jericho, “the City of Palms.” John 12:1, 12 also enables one to identify this as the Sunday before the Friday Passover on which Jesus will be crucified, hence, the liturgical tradition of referring to this day as Palm Sunday. The whole picture conveys celebration and honor, reminiscent of the victory parades with which triumphant kings and generals in Old Testament and intertestamental times were

welcomed (cf. 2 Kgs 9:13; 1 Macc 13:51). The strewing of garments and branches further demonstrates how the crowds have the wrong messianic concept. There will be no victory party when they arrive in Jerusalem. The second “them” in v. 7 has as its nearest antecedent in Greek the “cloaks,” of which probably more than one were put on each donkey, so there is little or no justification here for the common accusation that Matthew has created an absurd picture of Jesus straddling two animals.

The crowds acclaim Jesus as Messiah with regal, Davidic terminology. “Son of David” also echoes the blind men’s cry in 20:30. “Hosanna” originally meant *God save us* but by the first century was probably just a cry of praise to Yahweh. The “He who comes in the name of the Lord,” like the “coming one” of whom John the Baptist spoke (recall under 3:11), refers to the Messiah, and the entire beatitude echoes Ps 118:26. On “hosanna in the highest,” see also Ps 148:1.

**21:10–11** The whole procession has a powerful impact on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, even though they are used to huge crowds of festival pilgrims. “Stirred” is rather mild for *eseisthē* (used of earthquakes and apocalyptic upheavals; 27:51; Rev 6:13). The NEB’s “wild with excitement” and Weymouth’s “was thrown into commotion” both capture the sense better. “Who is this?” does not imply that the people have never seen Jesus before or do not know his name, though many in town from outside of Israel may not have encountered him previously. But Matthew is more interested in raising the Christological question again. The predominantly Galilean crowd replies truthfully but inadequately. On Jesus as a “prophet,” cf. 13:57 and 16:14; as from obscure Nazareth, cf. 2:23. The crowd betrays no knowledge of Jesus’ kingly birthplace in Bethlehem (2:5–6). Nevertheless, their fervor temporarily deters the authorities, who would otherwise have arrested him at once (v. 46). Verses 10b–11 are unique to Matthew. Verse 10b may hark back to 2:3 as an indictment of most in the city (*pasa*, often translated “all,” here means *the whole* rather than every single inhabitant). Verse 11 furthers Matthew’s heightened interest in Christology.

Blomberg, C. (1992). [Matthew](#) (Vol. 22, pp. 311–313). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

## **New American Commentary - Mark 11:1-11**

**11:1** The “Mount of Olives” is across the Kidron Valley and directly to the east of Jerusalem. Its summit and western slopes afford a marvelous view of the city (cf. 13:3). “Bethany” was on its southeast slope out of sight of and about two miles from Jerusalem. The exact location of “Bethphage” is uncertain, but it probably was nearer to Jerusalem than Bethany. The order of mention therefore is strange and has been used as another indication that the author was not a native of Palestine. The matter troubled ancient copyists, some of whom omitted “Bethphage.” Some modern scholars have conjectured that “Bethany” did not appear in Mark’s original (it does not in Matt 21:1) and that it was taken from vv. 11–12 and added to an early copy. More likely Jerusalem is mentioned first as the goal of the journey, and the order of Bethphage and Bethany is determined by their relationship to Jerusalem.

**11:2** Whether the village was Bethany or Bethphage (or even some other) is uncertain, but most think it was Bethphage because it was nearer to Jerusalem. The word “colt” could refer to the young

of many different animals, but in view of Matt 21:2 most agree that it was a young donkey. Matthew, incidentally, mentioned both a donkey and her colt. The passages just cited indicate that an animal that previously had not been used was thought to be appropriate for sacred use. Skeptics have questioned how the two unnamed disciples could have known the donkey had not been ridden previously.

**11:3–6** Many questions have been raised about the meaning and reference of the word the NIV translates “Lord” in v. 3. Should it be translated “Lord,” or “master” (i.e., the owner), or even “God”? The last is most unlikely. If the second, was Jesus its owner; or was its owner with Jesus at the time? If Jesus were not the owner, and if the owner were not with Jesus, had Jesus made prior arrangements for its use? Nowhere else in Mark did Jesus refer to himself as “Lord” (though cf. 2:28; 5:19; 12:36; 13:35), but that does not mean he could not have done so in the present instance. Although there is still a trace of the “messianic secret” in the account, since 8:29 that secret has been in the process of being revealed (note especially 10:46–52). Whatever Aramaic word Jesus actually used, Mark probably used the Greek word *kyrios* to indicate further the true identity of Jesus. If so, it should be translated “Lord” and understood to refer to Jesus. Mark likely saw in the event an example of the supernatural knowledge and power of Jesus—the latter in influencing the bystanders to permit the disciples to take the colt (v. 6).

**11:7–8** A comparison with what was done for Jehu according to 2 Kgs 9:13 suggests that spreading garments under a person was a recognition of royal dignity. The word Mark used does not indicate the kind of branches. Only John 12:13 mentions palm branches.

**11:9–10** The quotation is from Ps 118:25–26. Psalm 118 is one of the “Hallel” (praise) psalms (104–106; 111–118; 135; 146–150). The second group, of which Ps 118 is the conclusion, was called the “Egyptian Hallel” because it praised God for the deliverance from Egypt. The psalms comprising it were sung at the Feast of Passover as well as at Pentecost, Tabernacles, and Dedication. This consideration increases the possibility that the entry took place soon before the Passover. “Hosanna” literally means *save us, we pray* and was originally a plea for help; but it later also became a shout of praise, as it is here. The statement “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” was originally directed to pilgrims as they approached the temple, but Mark no doubt wanted his readers/hearers to apply it to Jesus and to see him as the coming Messiah. Some evidence exists that the expression “he who comes” is a messianic title (cf. Gen 49:10). In v. 10 Jesus is not explicitly designated as the coming Davidic king. The kingdom and not the king is acclaimed. The implication that Jesus will establish the kingdom is, however, quite apparent.

**11:11** Note that Jesus entered not just the city but the temple as well. This was probably in preparation for its clearing the following day. If Jesus and his companions had walked in one day the twenty-one miles from Jericho—most of it uphill—one can understand why it was late, why the crowd dispersed, and why Jesus took no further action.

## New American Commentary - Luke 19:28-40

**19:28 After Jesus had said this.** By his introduction Luke linked the triumphal entry closely with the preceding parable dealing with Jesus' kingship (cf. 19:12, 14–15).

**He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.** For Luke a divine necessity lay behind this. See Introduction 8 (1).

**19:29 He approached Bethphage and Bethany.** The exact location of Bethphage, even whether it lies east or west of Bethany, is uncertain. Luke most probably referred to it because it was found in his Markan source. Bethany lies on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives two to three miles from Jerusalem. It is referred to again in 24:50.

**At the hill called the Mount of Olives.** The Mount of Olives lies directly east of Jerusalem 2,660 feet above sea level. To reach Jerusalem one would proceed west down the Mount of Olives, through the Kidron Valley, and into the temple area through the eastern gate, later called the Golden Gate.

**He sent two of his disciples.** The disciples are unnamed in all three Synoptic Gospels.

**19:30 Go to the village ahead of you.** The village possibly was Bethphage.

**As you enter it, you will find.** This can be interpreted as an example of Jesus' prescience or as due to his prearrangement. If Jesus prearranged this, then the messianic character of the triumphal entry is heightened, for this means that Jesus intentionally sought to fulfill Zech 9:9 by riding into Jerusalem on a colt that never had been ridden. This would explain from a historical perspective why the owners of the colt permitted the disciples to take it. Yet it is quite possible that Luke and his readers might not have interpreted this text in so historical a manner. They might have thought that Jesus, the Lord (Luke 19:34), knew that a colt would be there because of his supernatural knowledge.

**A colt.** Matthew 21:2 assumes that this was the colt of a donkey. The term (*pōlon*) simply means *colt* and can refer to a young horse or a young donkey. Luke's readers may very well have known this tradition, and if Matt 21:5 reflects a common association of this event to Zech 9:9, they would have assumed that the "colt" referred to a young donkey.

**Which no one has ever ridden.** Compare Luke 23:53. Such an animal was qualified to perform a sacred task (cf. Num 19:2; Deut 21:3; 1 Sam 6:7). This may also allude to the "young colt" of Zech 9:9.

**19:31 If anyone asks.** Jesus prepared the disciples for the future encounter with the owners.

**The Lord needs it.** "Lord" (*kyrios*) would be interpreted by Luke's readers as the Lord Jesus, not the owners (literally *lords* [*kyrioī*]) of the colt (19:33). This is evident because the owners/lords were told "the Lord needs it." Historically there is no reason why Jesus could not have arranged beforehand to have a colt ready. Only if we deny Jesus a messianic consciousness can we deny this possibility. The likelihood of the owners' accepting the commandeering or requisitioning of their animal by a stranger is quite low, as is the availability of a donkey that had never been ridden.

**19:32 Those who were sent ahead.** Compare 13:34.

**Found it just as he had told them.** Compare 19:30; 22:13.

**19:33–34** Compare 19:31. The strongest argument favoring a prearrangement is the total compliance of the owners. Why would they permit the disciples to do this? To say "the Lord needs it" requires either a prearrangement or that the owners were believers who would do whatever Jesus asked.

**19:35 Threw their cloaks on the colt.** The disciples used their garments to serve as a kind of saddle.

**Put Jesus on it.** Luke changed his sources, “he [Jesus] sat on it” (Mark 11:7), and thus paralleled more closely Solomon’s coronation (1 Kgs 1:33).

The space devoted to the colt (Luke 19:30–35) suggests its important role in the story. As a result Zech 9:9, even though not quoted, is a key to what is taking place. Luke therefore understood Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem as a parabolic action.

**19:36 People spread their cloaks on the road.** Spreading cloaks on the road is an act of homage as in 2 Kgs 9:13 (cf. also Josephus, *Antiquities* 9.6.2. [9.111]). Luke made no mention of the spreading of branches, perhaps due to the nationalistic overtones of such an act.

**19:37 Where the road goes down the Mount of Olives.** What takes place, occurs as Jerusalem comes into sight.

**The whole crowd of disciples.** The following response of praise came from the disciples, not from Jerusalem. Jerusalem’s response is found in Luke 19:39–40, even though this occurs before Jesus enters the city. For the existence of a large group of disciples, see comments on 6:13.

**Began joyfully.** Luke may have added this in order to tie this episode more closely to Zech 9:9, which begins “Rejoice.”

**To praise God in loud voices.** For praising (*aineō*) God, see comments on 2:13 (for a similar term [*doxazō*], see comments on 5:25). The praise of the angels and shepherds (Luke 2:13, 20) at the birth of the Son of David now resumes as he enters Jerusalem. “In loud voices” echoes a favorite Lukan expression.

**For all the miracles they had seen.** Compare 10:13; Acts 2:22; 8:13; 19:11. Luke wanted his readers to know that the four miracles listed in the travel narrative (Luke 13:10–17; 14:1–6; 17:11–19; 18:35–43) are only samples of Jesus’ works.

**19:38 Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!** This, minus the words “the king,” comes from Ps 118:26. This psalm was used to greet pilgrims entering Jerusalem. At first glance this verse appears to be the fulfillment of Luke 13:35, but on closer examination it is evident that the prophecy of 13:35 was not fulfilled. Jerusalem was not yet forsaken (13:35a), and it was not Jerusalem that uttered this benediction but Jesus’ disciples. As 13:32–33 foretold, Jerusalem’s response would be quite different. Matthew’s placement of this saying (Matt 23:39) after the events of Palm Sunday indicates that he did not think the events surrounding the triumphal entry fulfilled this prophecy. It is best to interpret Luke similarly. See comments on 13:35. Luke omitted from his source “Hosanna” and “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David” (cf. Mark 11:9–10). The first omission corresponds to his tendency to omit Aramaic terms (see comments on 8:54). The second may be due to what Luke said about the coming of the kingdom in 19:11.

**The king.** This is a clear Lukan addition to the tradition, as a comparison with Matt 21:9; Mark 11:10 reveals. Jesus’ kingship has been alluded to in Luke 1:32 and in 18:38–39 (cf. also 23:3, 37–38; Acts 17:7). In the preceding parable his kingship is seen as bestowed at his resurrection/ascension and exercised at his parousia. Thus the beatitude here is a proleptic announcement of Jesus’ kingship, which like God’s kingdom is already a present reality in Jesus’ ministry but whose ultimate consummation awaits the parousia.

**Who comes.** See comments on 7:19.

**Peace in heaven.** This is a strange statement, whereas “peace on earth” (Luke 2:14) would be perfectly understandable. Luke may have changed the wording of 2:14 to “peace in heaven” because the peace Jesus sought to bring (10:5–6) does not find fulfillment in Jerusalem. On the contrary, as the next pericope reveals, Jerusalem would not experience peace (19:42) but war and destruction (19:43–44). Nevertheless peace reigns in heaven, for God’s divine plan is being fulfilled. Only when the Son of Man returns will peace finally come to Jerusalem (13:35).

**Glory in the highest!** Literally the two expressions are *in heaven (A) peace (B) and glory (b) in the highest (a)* and form a chiasmus. Compare 2:14.

**19:39** Luke ended his account of the triumphal entry with a brief conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees found only in Luke. He added this to show the reality portrayed in the picture part of the preceding parable (cf. 19:14).

**Some of the Pharisees in the crowd.** This is the last reference to the Pharisees in Luke. It was for Luke a demonstration of the parabolic picture in 19:14 and in 20:9–18. Whereas in some instances the Pharisees are viewed positively, or at least neutrally (see comments on 13:31; cf. Acts 5:34–39; 15:5; 23:6–9), here, as in most instances, they are portrayed negatively. Luke’s readers would not have interpreted this as a Pharisaic attempt to save Jesus from the consequences of this messianic excitement. They would have interpreted this as an attempt to squelch the disciples’ praise of God (cf. Matt 21:14–16).

**19:40 If they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.** The Greek construction (*ean* with the future indicative) is rare, and the verse is capable of several interpretations. The most likely is, “If the disciples would stop their praising of God and his Son, then the stones would take their place and cry out praise in their stead.” Nothing can detract from this day. There may be an allusion here to Hab 2:11. Whereas earlier Jesus had given a command to silence (see comments on 9:21), this day there was no silencing the welcoming of the Son of David, Israel’s King.

## The Lukan Message

Luke incorporated the tradition of the triumphal entry into the overall purpose and scheme of his “orderly account.” Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem brings the travel narrative (cf. Luke 9:51) to its consummation. Christologically, Jesus’ Davidic sonship, his kingship, and his role as the Coming One are not only supported by this incident but reach a climax. His prearrangement or prescience (see comments on 19:30) also supports this Christological teaching as does the title “Lord” (19:31). Luke anticipated that his readers would see in this account a confirmation of much of the Christology of which they had been taught (1:4). Jesus is the promised Messiah. Born of Davidic lineage (1:27, 32; 3:31), he entered Jerusalem as Israel’s true King. He would die as King of the Jews (23:2–3, 11, 38, 42), but he would also be raised and return as their King (Acts 2:33–36; 13:21–23, 30–39). Luke in recounting this story wanted his readers to know that Jesus is indeed the fulfillment of all the OT promises. This Jesus, in whom they believed, is truly the Son of God.

Yet there is a dark cloud hanging over this whole incident, and Luke taught his readers once again that what had happened to Israel was the result of their rejection of the Christ. See Introduction 7 (2). The Pharisaic response (Luke 19:39) reveals that Israel had not received their King (cf. 19:14). The “triumphal” entry from a human perspective was not “triumphal.” What had been true from the very

beginning continues even now. The Son of God is rejected. This theme, the rejection of Jesus and the resulting judgment, will be brought to the forefront by Luke in 19:41–44, which is the climax of 19:28–40. Here the cry of 13:34–35 will be repeated. Judgment will come. Tragedy would soon strike, for Israel had headed down a road that did not lead to peace (19:42) but, on the contrary, to destruction. Judgment would come upon the nation in the events of a.d. 70 but even more frightfully in its exclusion from the kingdom (cf. Acts 13:46–47; 18:6; 28:25–28). Finally, such characteristics as obedience, rejoicing, and praising God are also emphasized in the account.

Stein, R. H. (1992). *Luke* (Vol. 24, pp. 478–482). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

## **New American Commentary - John 12:12-19**

**12:12** The story opens with a typical Johannine introductory phrase “the next day” (cf. 1:29, 35, 43; 6:22). This expression is basically equivalent to the Johannine use of *metātauta* (“after this,” cf. 3:22; 5:1; 6:1; 7:1, etc.) and the frequent *nyn* (“now,” cf. 3:25; 4:1, 46; 5:19; 6:52, 60; 7:25, 40, 45; 8:12, 21; 9:24; 11:17, 32, 38, 45, 47 and especially in this chapter 12:1, 3, 9, 20, 34). The use of *palin* (“again,” cf. 8:12, 21; 10:19, 31) can also be viewed similarly. If the anointing took place on the evening after Sabbath concluded, this event could be understood to have occurred on Sunday (that would suppose the next day were to be viewed by Roman time designations as the next morning and not by Jewish calculations as starting after sundown of the following day).

Although the term “crowd” occurs in many of the Synoptic stories of Jesus, in John it clusters in chaps. 5–7. The crowd then gives way to the critics of Jesus at 7:49 during the height of the controversy to reappear first at 11:42, then in 12:9, and again here. The presence of the crowd in John, however, is short-lived, and after 12:34 the term disappears from this Gospel. But here the crowd is particularly singled out as being “great” (*polys*, 12:9, 12). The festival times in Jerusalem attracted great crowds. Although Josephus, in seeking to impress Hellenistic readers, surely exaggerates in positing that the crowd at one of the Passover feasts prior to the fall of the Temple would have been in excess of an incredible two and a half million people, we can at least conclude that the gatherings must have been very large. Jeremias estimates that over a hundred thousand people, counting the Jerusalemites, could have easily participated in the Passover.<sup>24</sup>

**12:13–15** The story of the entry itself is told with a minimal number of words. When the Old Testament references are extracted, what one learns is that the crowd met Jesus with palm branches and acclaimed him. Then Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it. That is the basic story line.

In commenting on the text, Dodd counters the critics who say that palm branches did not grow in Jerusalem because of the weather by reminding readers that pilgrims at feasts (especially at Tabernacles) carried such palm branches from areas nearby. The valley east of Jerusalem (around Jericho) has always been fruitful with various palms. Those who have lived there realize that Jerusalem can get quite cold and that palms might have at times difficulty growing there. But we must not assume that we know what it was like two thousand years ago. The problem is not simply one of weather. It is a problem of the history and geography of Jerusalem involving its many wars, its battered landscape, and the cutting of trees over the centuries. Nevertheless, the text does not

demand that the palms grew in Jerusalem. It simply says that they “took” (*elabon*, a very general verb) palm branches (*ta baia tōn phoinikōn*, a rather redundant statement like “palm branches of palms,” cf. *T. Naphthali* 5:4). Where they obtained them is not stated.

Palm and other branches were traditionally carried to make temporary shelters as part of the Festival of Tabernacles (Lev 23:40; cf. also Neh 8:15). Because of the connection of palms with Tabernacles, T. W. Manson argued that this entrance probably took place at the Feast of Tabernacles. That suggestion, however, is unnecessary because palms were also used as fronds or symbols of welcome for Jewish heroes returning from battle or at unusual periods of rejoicing (cf. the ceremony at the welcome of the victor Simon in *1 Macc* 13:51 and at the initiation of Hanukkah with his brother Judas Maccabeus in *2 Macc* 10:7; cf. also *2 Macc* 14:4).

The crowd here obviously came out to meet a hero (12:13), “shouting” their hosannas and pronouncing a blessing on the “one who comes” in the name of the Lord—namely, “the King of Israel!” This statement is a composite acclamation drawn particularly from Ps 118:25–26 and Zech 9:9, where Zion/Jerusalem is called upon to rejoice at the coming of their king. The expression “he who comes” (*hōerchomenos*) is a familiar designation for the expectation of the coming Messiah and the initiation of the messianic age (cf. Ps 118:26 and John 1:9).

The reference to the king of Israel (12:15) should remind the reader that in chap. 1 (in the third Cameo of Witness) Nathanael had already identified Jesus as the “King of Israel” (1:49). But it should also call to mind the fact that Jesus had withdrawn from the people when they attempted to force him into becoming king (6:15). The designation of “king” for Jesus, as will become evident in the further unfolding of the Gospel, was clearly an appropriate title for him, but his kingship was not what people had expected (18:33–37). Not only was he not a political ruler, but he was surprisingly *a king who would die on the cross* (19:19). The crowd might well acclaim him king, but they did not understand what that meant for him.

The crowd attached themselves to the idea of triumph in Zech 9:9. But when Jesus chose a young donkey for his entrance rather than a chariot and horses or a camel (the animals used by Roman and Eastern conquerors), he undoubtedly understood that there was another perspective in that text of Zechariah, a perspective that would not be warmly welcomed by the crowd. That perspective was *humility*.

Moreover, hidden in the boisterous crowd’s call of “Hosanna” was an ironic twist of immense proportions. When the crowd shouted Hosanna (from the Aramaic, pronounced *hōsa’na*, or Heb. *hōsī’āhna*), which is a cry for “salvation now,” they were begging for something far beyond anything they anticipated. Undoubtedly in the background of their cry of Hosanna here was the great chant of Ps 118 (particularly 118:25), a psalm that was used in connection with the Festivals of Tabernacles, Dedication, and Passover (note that these are the same three feasts the evangelist chose to highlight in what I have called the Festival Cycle of this Gospel).

The connection between waving branches and the Hosanna of Ps 118:25 should not be missed here. In the Feast of Tabernacles, for instance, the male participants (both men and boys) waved the *lūlab* when the Temple singers reached the crescendo of “Hosanna.” The use of the psalm in connection with Passover is also well identified in the tractate on Passover in the *Mishnah*. But what is most intriguing is the irony in the call of the crowd for salvation. It was in this entrance to Jerusalem that Jesus said that his hour had come (12:23). Indeed, it would be on the cross that Jesus would

fulfill the confessional prediction of the Samaritans when they called him the “Savior of the World!” (4:42). But the crowd’s idea of salvation and their idea of a messianic savior was not what John knew this entrance was about. If they had only understood the messianic implications of an earlier verse in that psalm (Ps 118:22), maybe they would have come to realize that the rejected stone would “become the head of the corner” (cf. the use in Matt 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:4, 7; cf. also Eph 2:20). But they did not.

In arriving at a fuller understanding of this story, one further matter should be addressed. That matter involves the issue of the subtle change that the evangelist has made in his use of the Zechariah text. Instead of saying, “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!” (Zech 9:9), John states, “Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion (John 12:15). It is instructive to notice at this point that while the text from Zechariah is quoted in Matthew (21:5), the part quoted above is not used there. The idea of rejoicing, however, is found in the Lukan story (19:37). But nowhere in these Synoptic stories is there an encouragement against fear as expressed here in John (cf. John 6:20). Newman and Nida note the variation between John and Zechariah here and conclude: “There is no obvious reason why John would have deliberately changed the wording; the best explanation seems to be that he was quoting loosely from memory.”

I must demur from such logic. Almost nothing in John happens by chance or loose memory. The book is too reasoned an argument to permit such a haphazard perspective. Instead, I believe the answer to the question of why John made this shift is most likely related to the way he has framed the whole event. Although the crowd did not understand the implications of their cry for salvation (Hosanna), John knew Jesus did. He knew that the road to salvation would be a traumatic experience, just as Jerusalem had to learn that there was comfort and hope in the midst of the exile when the Lord God, their shepherd, promised to come to Zion and encouraged them not to fear (Isa 40:1–11). But that was hardly the message the excited crowd wanted to hear. They were in for a shock.

## ***(2) The Reaction of the Disciples (12:16)***

**16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.**

**12:16** The perspective of the disciples at this point can at best be described as foggy or confused. Just as throughout the Synoptic Gospels the disciples seemed unable to “understand” (cf. Mark 6:52; 8:21), the Johannine evangelist indicates here that they were confused (“did not know,” *ouk egnōsan*, 12:16). They could be epitomized later in Thomas and Philip, who just could not conceive of where Jesus was going or who the Father was, even though Jesus had sought to teach them (cf. 14:5–11).

Barrett finds this verse to reflect an unreliable tradition and considers it to be “self-contradictory.” He wonders why the crowd understood the messianic significance of the entry of Jesus on a donkey and the disciples did not. But the point is that the crowd missed the real point of the entry, and the disciples were confused about the significance of all the events. It did not fit together for them.

But the situation of the disciples was not hopeless, and their fogginess was not a permanent state. At this point the evangelist, as a knowing narrator, provides us with a window into the future reality

that helps us understand the transformation that occurred in the disciples. Just as the narrator informed us earlier that the resurrection of Jesus provided the basis for understanding Jesus' statement concerning destroying the sanctuary and in three days he would raise it (cf. 2:19–21), so here he makes clear that the glorification of Jesus would enable the disciples to recall the event in its proper perspective. But at this point they still could not integrate the Old Testament texts, their view of Jesus as the Messiah, and Jesus' life and teachings (cf. the fascinating story of the way to Emmaus when Jesus did so for two of his followers in Luke 24:25–27). That post crucifixion-resurrection perspective, however, would come later.

### **(3) *The Reaction of the Pharisees (12:17–19)***

**17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. 18 Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet him. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”**

**12:17–18** Before John turns to identify the reaction of the Pharisees in another brief but very forceful verse (12:19), he reminds the reader of the setting for their reaction by referring to two important contexts. In the first place, he draws attention once again to the climactic sign of the raising of Lazarus and the fact that the people in the crowd that had been at that event were continuing to bear witness of Lazarus having been brought back from the tomb or literally from among the dead ones (*ek nekron*; 12:17; cf. 12:9). So startling was that event for everyone that the authorities had moved immediately to hatch their Passover Plot (11:47–50). As they suspected, that situation (11:48) did not improve with the passing of time but in fact got worse.

In the second verse (12:18) John rehearses the fact that the large Jerusalem crowd (a different crowd) had gathered (cf. 12:9, 12) in response (“they heard,” *ēkousan*) to the witness of the Lazarus crowd. Their interest had been peaked in this sign of the miracle worker and his recipient, who had his life restored (12:9). As a result, if there was going to be a gala reception, they wanted to join the event and went out to meet him. Although the crowd hardly understood John's sense of “sign,” here the crowd's acclaim of Jesus raised the concern of the Pharisee power brokers.

**12:19** The Pharisees, as representatives of the *religious establishment*, were completely frustrated by this “charismatic” leader who seemed to have sparked a messianic-like revival of passion among the people. As in every age, establishment people are highly threatened by charismatic types, even though as M. Weber has noted such people may have at one time gained power in a charismatic movement themselves. In their protectionism the “priestly type”/establishment people often estimate that any differences resulting from charismatics (in the social sense) is catastrophic. The situation was not very different in Jesus' day. The establishment had reckoned that the so-called Jesus crowd would ruin everything (the Romans would thus have to take care of restoring order forcibly; cf. 12:48). Their doom-prediction of his growing popular power seemed to be right on target. Indeed, they could only see their political helplessness (“you profit nothing,” *ouk ōphelaite*; the NIV reads “this is getting us nowhere”) in the face of Jesus' popularity. Thus, in exasperation they cried out, “The [whole]<sup>37</sup> world has gone after him!”

The idea of world (*kosmos*) in John is not, as some Christians might have come to think, a negative term (cf. John 3:16–19). Neither is it basically a geographical or territorial designation, but rather a reference to the population of the world. Thus Jesus is the light of the people of the world (1:9; 8:12), and his coming into the world (1:10) was to take away the sin of the people of the world (1:29). But because of hard hearts and rejection, the coming of Jesus also meant the judgment of the world (9:39).

In the present text the reactive cry of the Pharisees was, of course, an exaggeration. Yet for those in the establishment, it probably seemed that their control was collapsing. But for John their statement must have seemed ironic. Jesus had not come to be a political leader, although his entrance into Jerusalem here marked a strategic step in becoming “the Savior of the World” (cf. 4:42).

Borchert, G. L. (2002). *John 12–21* (Vol. 25B, pp. 40–46). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

## Holman New Standard Commentary - Matthew 21:1-11

**Supporting Idea:** *Jesus is indeed king; he has a fierce commitment to the truth; but he is a king who brings peace with a gentle spirit.*

Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem had been foreshadowed with growing anticipation ever since 16:21, where we find Jesus’ first passion prediction. There he mentioned Jerusalem as his goal. Jesus mentioned Jerusalem again in his third passion prediction (20:18). James, John, and their mother may have been anticipating the triumphant king setting up his kingdom upon his arrival in Jerusalem (20:21). The cries of the two blind men, using the messianic title “Son of David,” pointed to the entry (20:30–31). And the clearly messianic healing of the blind men built momentum toward the triumphal entry (20:34: cf. Isa. 35:5–6).

From a human standpoint, this marked the high point of Jesus’ earthly life, prior to his death and resurrection. The crowds, swollen by pilgrims coming for the Passover feast just a few days away, were swept up in anticipation of a decisive battle to oust the Roman oppressors, which they thought would be led by the promised Messiah. Five days later a crowd comprised of many of these same people would be shouting for the king’s execution (27:17–25).

What the people failed to understand was that the king had come to defeat a much greater enemy than Rome—an enemy that knew no national boundaries or respected no political or sectarian differences. It was an enemy whose defeat would have repercussions far beyond the end of this life. Jesus had come to defeat Satan, our own sin, and the claim of death.

**21:1–3.** The name **Bethphage** means “House of Unripe Figs.” This was a village on the southeast slope of the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. The mountain was several hundred feet higher than Jerusalem, providing a spectacular view of the city.

Jesus now drew upon his divine omniscience to prepare for his proper entrance into the city. He sent two disciples into the village, foretelling their discovery of a donkey and her colt. He instructed them to untie them and bring them to him and to be prepared for any objections from observers. The

Lord had already prepared the hearts of the animals' owner, so that, at the mention of **the Lord needs them**, the owner would send the disciples promptly on their way with his animals.

**21:4–5.** Here Matthew added a parenthetical comment to show Jesus' fulfillment of another messianic prophecy—this one from Zechariah 9:9 (about 500 b.c.).

**21:6–8.** Matthew stated that the two disciples obeyed Jesus, and the two animals were brought to Jesus. The disciples laid their coats (their cloaks or outer garments) on the donkey and the colt, providing a crude saddle. Jesus sat on the colt, riding a humble animal as a king did in times of peace. Most of the people in the crowd took their cue from the disciples' example. They laid their coats across Jesus' path in the road, as though to give him the "red carpet treatment." Others cut branches from nearby trees to extend the "carpet" into the city. John 12:13 tells us the branches were "palm branches," thus our celebration of "Palm Sunday" five days before Good Friday and seven days before Resurrection Sunday, or "Easter."

**21:9.** The crowd milled around the king, some preceding him as heralds, some following as adoring loyalists. The picture is of a royal procession.

As the crowd moved along, they shouted words of praise, celebrating the arrival of Israel's Savior, the Messiah-King. **Hosanna** is literally a plea to "save," but by this time it had become an expression of praise for God's salvation. As had been acknowledged twice by blind men (Matt. 9:27; 20:30–31), and speculated upon by the people who witnessed an exorcism (12:23), now the identity of Jesus as the promised royal **Son of David** was proclaimed with praise.

For a short time, the people would acknowledge Jesus' true identity as the sovereign Son of David, but they would fail to identify him also as the sacrificial Son of Abraham. They knew he had come to restore his kingdom, but they missed the fact that he was also here to redeem his people. They anticipated the sovereignty but overlooked the sacrifice. Jesus would not exercise the rule without the redemption.

The phrase **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord** was taken from Psalm 118:26. Psalm 118 is a "psalm of ascent," sung as the people ascended toward the temple in Jerusalem for worship, inviting others "with boughs in hand" to "join in the festal procession" (Ps. 118:27). Jesus was about to ascend to the temple on the highest **point** of the city. This psalm is also that from which Jesus would take his quote concerning "the stone the builders rejected" (Ps. 118:22–23; Matt. 22:42–44), predicting judgment on the "builders" or leaders of Israel.

This second expression of praise worshiped Jesus as the one who **comes in the name of the Lord**—the one who comes representing Yahweh, in this case Yahweh himself. Jesus would put this same quotation to different use in 23:39.

This portion of the psalms of ascent (Pss. 113–118) was referred to as the Great Hallel, and it was sung by the people during the Passover season. A third shout from the crowd, **Hosanna in the highest!** implied praise to Yahweh, who is the highest and who dwells in highest heaven.

**21:10–11.** As the royal procession passed through the city gate, **the whole city was stirred.** Jesus had not frequented Jerusalem recently (none of his previous Jerusalem experiences are recorded in Matthew). While his fame must have been heard here, he was not as readily recognized as he would have been in the north. But his identity was made known wherever the procession traveled in the city. When city dwellers and merchants inquired about his identity, his enthusiastic followers made him known as **Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.** Jesus had spent most

of his ministry in the northern province of Galilee. His hometown was Nazareth in that same province (2:22–23). Thus, he was known by his town of origin. At the mention of his name and origin, most people in Jerusalem probably perked up with recognition. Many more must have joined the procession on the way to the temple.

Weber, S. K. (2000). *Matthew* (Vol. 1, pp. 337–339). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

## Holman New Standard Commentary - Mark 11:1-11

**Supporting Idea:** *Jesus presents himself in public as a king.*

**11:1.** This verse introduces a new section in Jesus' ministry as he entered Jerusalem. This introduces what is typically called the passion week, beginning with his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and ending with his resurrection on Easter Sunday. Six of Mark's sixteen chapters deal with this last week. This shows the importance of these events in Jesus' life. Jesus went through the village Bethany on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, two miles east of Jerusalem. Bethphage is less well-known but near Bethany.

**11:2–3.** Most interpreters think the city Jesus sent the disciples to was Bethphage because it was closer to Jerusalem. Some commentators take this verse as evidence of Jesus' omniscience. Others believe that Jesus had prearranged receiving the colt on one of his other trips to Jerusalem. The text does not indicate which view is correct, but neither does damage to the text or to the character of Jesus.

Jesus gave instructions that if anyone asked what they were doing, the disciples were to reply that **the Lord needs it**. The word *Lord* (Gr. *kyrios*) could mean "Lord" or simply "master." It is the first time in Mark's Gospel that Jesus referred to himself as Lord. While he could have meant simply "master" or "sir," he probably meant Lord in our fullest interpretation of the word. The messianic secret which is so prevalent in Mark's Gospel is slowly being revealed. Jesus has spoken to his disciples of his messiahship, identity, death, and resurrection. It would not be out of keeping with this gradual revelation for him to further reveal himself here.

**11:4–6.** The fact that a great number of details are given here may point to Peter as one of the two disciples sent on this errand. The situation happened as Jesus warned them, and they repeated Jesus' words to the questioners. While a few interpreters think the words had a powerful effect on the listeners—enough for them to relinquish their possession of the colt—the text does not support this. It seems more likely that the owners would have heard of Jesus. Perhaps they knew him personally and they realized he was an honest man, if not a prophet. They could be sure of having the colt returned.

**11:7–8.** Cloaks were laid on the colt to serve as a rough saddle. The cloaks thrown on the ground along with the branches served as recognition of royalty. Cole sees in this a lavish expression of love similar to that offered to Jesus by Mary (Cole, *Mark*, p. 248). Barclay, on the other hand, believes this to be further evidence of a people who willfully misunderstood Jesus' words and actions (Barclay, *Mark*, p. 266). I think both can be satisfied by the account. There was lavishness in their love, even

though their love had not reached full potential. At this moment, they did love him with all their hearts and desired to honor him as king. But Barclay is right—they misunderstood what kind of a king he was.

**11:9–10.** These two verses make it clear what the crowds were expecting. **Hosanna** means literally “save now.” It was an acclamation of praise to one who had the power to save. The same word is used in Psalm 118:25, where it is translated, “O Lord, save us.” This psalm is a thanksgiving psalm. Interpretations vary as to what it referred to. It may have referred to deliverance from Egypt, or it could have celebrated release from captivity and the rebuilt temple. In either case, it celebrated deliverance from captivity. It was an appropriate psalm for Jesus, who came to deliver humanity from captivity to sin and death.

The reference to David’s kingdom is a clear messianic title. The crowds were acknowledging that Jesus was heir to David’s throne. **He who comes** was another euphemism for the Messiah. The crowds expected Jesus to establish his kingdom immediately.

**11:11.** True to Mark’s Gospel, the triumphant entry into Jerusalem is a bit more somber here than that recorded in Matthew. The Gospel of Matthew states that the city was stirred, and Luke says that the crowd was singing joyfully. But Mark records that when these events were finished, he went to the temple, had a look around, and then went back to Bethany, most likely to the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. This verse shows Jesus as thoughtful, deliberate. This thoughtful pause here and the actions that follow remind us of a prophecy of judgment in Daniel: “You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting” (5:27). The guilty verdict was in; the sentence would be carried out the next day.

Cooper, R. L. (2000). *Mark* (Vol. 2, pp. 183–185). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

## Holman New Standard Commentary - Luke 19:28-40

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** *Jesus is the eternal king, the promised Messiah, who comes in the name of the Lord.*

**19:28.** Jerusalem! The goal is attained. Now the tension mounts. How will the Messiah be received in God’s holy city? Have we been listening to what Jesus said? Are we ready for the events to follow in swift order? Jesus has established himself as the king in the preceding narrative, but a king who had to go into the far country before returning in power. He has shown the nature of his kingdom—a kingdom different from that expected by the religious establishment. He had shown who would participate in the kingdom—those faithful to him, who had given up everything to follow him rather than those who had the religious system locked up in their own hands.

How would this idea of the kingdom play out? Jesus knew what would happen (9:22, 44–45; 12:49–50; 13:32–33; 17:25; 18:31–34). Still, the crowds and the disciples were not ready for Jerusalem, the city of David.

**19:29.** Approaching Jerusalem, Jesus passed through two small villages east of the holy city on the Mount of Olives, which looked down on the city and the Kidron Valley. The Mount of Olives, the

central of three peaks rising east of Jerusalem, stands 2,660 feet above sea level. Standing on it, a person faced the temple. Zechariah 14:4–5 situates the final battle on the Mount of Olives (cf. Acts 1). The king stood with the holy city at his feet.

**19:30–31.** The king sent two of his disciples on a mission: “Find a donkey that has never been ridden before and bring it to me. If you face questions, just say, ‘The Lord needs it.’” Jesus acted in regal manner but commandeered a lowly animal.

**19:32–35.** Events occurred just as Jesus described. So the disciples brought the donkey to Jesus, threw their robes on it as a saddle, and set Jesus on it (cf. 1 Kgs. 1:33 for the coronation of Solomon on a mule). Zechariah 9:9 used poetic parallelism to describe the messianic king riding on a donkey to bring salvation to his people. His coming would break all instruments of war and bring peace to the city of peace.

**19:36.** The disciples also spread their robes on the street, signifying a royal procession (cf. 2 Kgs. 9:13).

**19:37.** The crowd of disciples, indicating a group beyond the Twelve, joined the procession, praising God for all the miraculous signs Jesus had given (cf. 7:22; 13:10–17; 14:1–6; 17:11–19; 18:35–43).

**19:38.** They praised Jesus as king, citing Psalm 118:26. Finally, Jesus’ glory was openly recognized (cf. 1:32; 18:38–39). He was more than the babe of Nazareth or the Galilean rabbi. He was more than a miracle worker. He was a royal figure entering the royal city down the royal road. He came as God’s representative, God’s chosen king. He showed that the hopes of Israel are being fulfilled. God has sent the messianic king to bring peace, a peace that only heaven can establish, and a peace established in heaven that cannot be negated on earth. This means that the angels who rejoice over one sinner who repents now see all the heavenly glory of God’s plan of salvation brought to fruition. As earthlings praise the king on a donkey, so heaven glories in God’s great work of salvation.

**19:39.** This was too much for the Pharisees. They came to crucify Jesus, not to praise him. They asked Jesus to silence the disciples. Do not let such blasphemy continue, they said. They showed themselves to be the enemies opposing Jesus so aptly described in the previous parable.

**19:40.** Impossible, replied Jesus. This is the moment God ordained for me to receive praise. If human voices were silent, nature would shout its praise. The Pharisees just do not understand the nature of the God they spend so much time talking about. They are evil servants as in the parable. The king has come. They see only a false teacher on a donkey. But for those who do see the king, praise is the language of the day. Such language will lead to eternal rewards and responsibility.

Butler, T. C. (2000). *Luke* (Vol. 3, pp. 318–319). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

## Holman New Standard Commentary - John 12:12-19

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** *Quickly the crisis of values gave way to a crisis of confrontation, the first truly public presentation of the Messiah to Israel. Jesus*

*initiated the event, probably to stir good people to action, to fulfill Scripture, and to offer himself as the Passover lamb.*

**12:12–13.** This was indeed an “hour of decision” for the crowd. In this event, recorded also in Matthew 21, Mark 11, and Luke 19, Jesus allowed himself to be recognized as **the King of Israel**. The word **hosanna** means “save now,” likely a plea for action against the authority of Rome. The first confrontation was a confrontation of choice. The blessing of verse 13 comes from Psalm 118:25, 26 and John’s later citation in verse 15 from Zechariah 9:9.

Josephus estimated the Passover crowd at 2,700,000, suggesting they would have been driving over a quarter of a million lambs into Jerusalem for this Passover feast. The palm branch had become a national symbol during the time of the Maccabees, and the nationalism and liberation of this occasion would certainly fit the scene.

Carson sums it up: “The crowds do not simply pronounce a blessing in the name of the Lord on the one who comes, but pronounce a blessing on the one who comes in the name of the Lord. The next line shows that this is the way the crowd understands their own words: *blessed is the king of Israel* is not a quotation from Psalm 118, but messianic identification of ‘he who comes in the name of the Lord’ ” (Carson, p. 432).

**12:14–15.** The synoptic Gospels make a great deal more of the donkey than does John, and herein we see his purpose and focus once again. As to the quote from Zechariah 9:9, we should not be thrown off balance by the fact that it is not an exact citation. The phrase **Daughter of Zion** is a personification of Jerusalem, and in a broader sense the nation of Israel. The general spirit of the coming of the gentle king certainly captures the essence of the Zechariah passage. Lewis remarks, “The Zechariah prophecy, though known to be messianic, linked Messiahship to peaceful and non-political ideals, and Jesus only chose to make such a public ‘statement’ when His rejection by the Jewish rulers was irreversible and His death very near” (Lewis, p. 169).

The key to much of this type of New Testament text is the phrase that appears at the end of verse 14—**as it is written**. Everything about Jesus’ life and ministry fulfilled Old Testament promises. This triumphal-entry event forced people to make a decision, fulfilled what the Bible promised, and offered the Passover Lamb—the only lamb in the city that day riding on a ceremonial donkey.

**12:16.** The disciples still had not grasped Christ’s nature and work, even as long as they had been with him. Writing many years after these events, John admitted that only after the glorification of Jesus (probably a reference to both resurrection and ascension) did they really grasp what had happened to them. Indeed, we find them trying to recreate this kind of event in Acts 1 when they asked, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). Like the disciples, our faith may have slow formation, but it should lead us to rock-solid commitment.

The inscription on the fly leaf of a Bible found in a tin box under the cornerstone of Wellesley College reads, “This building is humbly dedicated to our heavenly Father with the hope and prayer that He will always be first in everything in the institution—that His Word may be faithfully taught here, and that He will use it as a means of leading precious souls to the Lord Jesus Christ.” Whether that mission still guides the leaders of Wellesley is another matter. What we do know is that it should serve as the lodestar for every evangelical church, college, and mission board.

**12:17–19.** The confrontation and misunderstanding led to hostility. Actually, we find nothing new here. The common people, still affected by the Lazarus event, came out to see Jesus. The religious

leaders rejected him with increasing malice. Their exaggeration makes us wish they had spoken the truth, but public miracles do not always produce personal faith.

John once again applied a touch of irony in reciting the last phrase of our passage: **Look how the whole world has gone after him!** Again like Caiaphas, we see a prophecy unintended by the prophet. Surely John wanted his readers to grasp his use of the word *kosmos* to include many beyond the numerous pilgrims crowding Jerusalem for the Passover feast. For him the word describes lost and blind people on a planet in rebellion against its Maker. And if we wonder how far John was willing to push his point, do not go away—Gentiles were right outside the door.

Gangel, K. O. (2000). [\*John\*](#) (Vol. 4, pp. 233–235). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.