

More Than A Prophet Matthew 21:9

As we enter what is called Holy week, beginning today with Palm Sunday, then our Good Friday service and culminating next week on Easter or Resurrection Sunday, it is a challenge to bring messages that will inspire and change. Listening to a message this past week by Alistair Begg, He noted two concerns when it comes to messages around special events on the Christian calendar.

The first challenge for the hearer is familiarity. Have you ever driven by something countless times but one day saw something you hadn't noticed before and wondered if it's always been there or if it's new?

I have been driving the same route to church for almost 17 years. About a year ago I looked off into the woods near the corner of Crouse and Hartland Road and saw something I had never seen before not too far from the road. As you drive south on Hartland Road just before the small bridge over Ore Creek, to the left you will see a canoe. It's been there quite a long time because the fiberglass is faded, but I just noticed it about a year ago.

It's the same with Scripture. We can read something so many times that we fail to see something that's been there in the passage because it's so familiar. There is a tendency on our part to hear a passage preached year after year and become so familiar with it that we tune out a bit to the message or the reading. We have heard the same passage so many times that we think we know everything there is to know on the topic and so busy ourselves with shopping or to do lists or a hundred other things we anticipate in the coming week. Familiarity with something we have read or heard multiple times is a challenge for the listener to remain engaged in order to apply new truth to transform our lives. It is on these occasions that we must especially and intently listen as we ask God's Spirit to teach us. Let's not allow familiarity to rob us of God teaching us.

At the other end of the spectrum is the challenge for the pastor. We want to honor the season and speak

to the events that surround the holy day. But just how many different ways can we preach the same passages year after year and have it be fresh. So we may tend to embellish some of the facts or add something the text doesn't say. For example, we might be compelled to preach on something like wondering what went through the mind of the donkey Jesus rode as He entered Jerusalem or to talk about the conversation that Simon of Cyrene must have had with his two boys Alexander and Rufus as they traveled back home on what it was like for him to carry the cross of Jesus.

For both the preacher and the listener alike, it requires the work of the Holy Spirit to teach us truth that will transform our hearts while we once again consider a familiar text. The infinite Word certainly has plenty of new things to teach us.

So it is today that we find ourselves reviewing the events that surround what your Bible heading may describe as the triumphal entry. This morning we are going to Matthew's account surrounding this event and we find it in **chapter 21**. We'll primarily be focusing on **verse 9**, but for context, follow with me as read **verses 1-11**.

Matthew 21:1-11

From the different accounts of this story we piece together that Jesus is traveling from Bethany along what is known as the Jericho Road. He has spent a bit of time at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus enjoying a meal with them. After dinner Mary took a bottle of perfume and anointed His feet. Two things are unusual about what she did. Oil was usually poured on the head. Then, instead of a towel, she used her hair to wipe His feet. In this way she showed her devotion to Jesus because the perfume was costly. It also demonstrated her humility since attention to the feet was normally the job of a servant. Once again we find Mary at the feet of Jesus. You may recall at an earlier gathering that it was Mary who sat at Jesus's feet listening to Him teach while Martha busied herself in the kitchen. Jesus described her act as a way of preparing Him for burial.

It was the following day that Jesus took His final

journey to Jerusalem. It was a festive time as Jews journeyed to the city and Temple where annually they gathered to celebrate the week of Passover. According to the law, this was one of three required events where Jews were to assemble. This one marked the remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt when the Israelites were miraculously delivered after being there for over 400 years.

Bursting with residents and pilgrims, the city of Jerusalem swelled during Passover. But something else made Passover a festive time. They believed that Passover was the time that the Messiah would reveal Himself and lay claim to the throne. I find it interesting that 33 years earlier after Jesus was born no one welcomed Him, except a few shepherds and then later on some Magi who rode into town wondering where the King of the Jews had been born. At that time King Herod and all the people were greatly troubled. Now 33 years later, the mood is quite different. It's celebratory not only because of Passover, but because they believed their long-awaited Messiah was coming to set up His kingdom. Anticipation and expectation were running high and we see that in **verse 9**.

It is clear that Jesus is the focal point or central figure in what is happening. All the attention was on Him. There were throngs of people in front of Him and following Him. He was given the royal treatment, if you will, as people put their coats on the ground as Jesus passed by. Others grabbed palm branches to wave in His honor. Palm branches were a sign of honor and a celebration of victory. In this case, they were in anticipation of the victory they expected would come at the hands of Jesus.

For around 100 years Rome had ruled Israel. Ever since the land had been overthrown first by the Babylonians, then by Medo-Persia, followed by Greece and then Rome, Palestine had been under the oppressive thumb of governments that had stripped away their freedom. Over time, the Old Testament prophecies speaking of the coming Messiah had changed. Instead of looking for a spiritual deliverer, they believed Messiah would be a political Savior who would arrive on the scene to

cast off the oppression of their enemies and free them from tyranny.

We can well understand their enthusiasm when they believed the long-awaited Messiah was now making Himself known and it would only be a matter of time before their subjugation ended.

As they approached the city, the words they sang were a quote from **Psalm 118**. Jewish tradition says that portions of this psalm were sung antiphonally as the people of Jerusalem sang the first part while the pilgrims coming into the city answered with the second part. Then they would unite in singing the last verse of the Psalm.

For a moment, let's pretend we are in that procession coming into Jerusalem. So let's have those on the my right read **verse 25**, those on my left will read **verse 26**, those on my right will read **verse 27**, those on my left will read **verse 28** and then in unison we will read **verse 29**. Those of you who are tuning in through Facebook, you just pick a side and join in. Now remember that this is a festive occasion, so we need to make it sound like a celebration, after all, the Messiah is riding in.

Psalm 118:25-29

Did they really understand what they were saying? Did they truly know what they meant by calling Jesus "the Son of David?" Did they comprehend the significance of declaring that He had come in the name of the Lord?

In John's account of the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 we read in **John 6:14-15** **"After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, 'Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make Him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by Himself."**

The reference to this coming prophet is found in **Deuteronomy 18:15-18**

After hearing the thunderous voice of God on Mt. Horeb, the people were afraid of God and believed they would die if God should speak again so asked for someone else to speak to them. Moses was told

by God that He would raise up others just like Moses to speak on His behalf whose voice they would need to obey just as if it was God speaking. God meant that there would be any number of prophets who would follow Moses. In our passage, the Jews believed Jesus was that prophet. Notice **Matthew 21:10-11** **“When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, ‘Who is this?’ The crowds answered, ‘This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.’”**

It seems clear to me that they did not have an accurate understanding of who Jesus was even though just a couple verses earlier they described Him as the Son of David.

Jesus had been with them for three years, heard His teaching, witnessed His miracles, observed His life and yet to them He was just a prophet. Even in their familiarity with the Old Testament, they still missed the obvious about Him. Nowhere in His teaching did He ever indicate that He came to remove their enemies by delivering them from Roman oppression. Instead, He taught them that He came to seek and save the lost. Nothing in what He did gave them the impression that He was going to establish an earthly kingdom. Instead, He was humble and gentle. He neither spoke about insurrection, amassed armies, nor accumulated arms. They assumed His intentions were to confront and overthrow the Roman government’s chokehold on their land and its people.

That gives us a brief background to what I want to share with you from **verse 9**. **“The crowds that went ahead of Him and those that followed shouted, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ‘Hosanna in the highest!’”**

Despite their spiritual ignorance, I want us to glean three things about Jesus that I find imbedded in the words spoken by the crowd that day. We will notice that it is a worthy name. We will notice that it is a welcoming name. We will notice that it is a wonderful name.

I. IT IS A WORTHY NAME

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

Hosanna is a word expressing, adoration, praise and joy. It means **“I beg you to save us” or “deliver us now.”** While it is often interchanged with the word hallelujah, it is really a plea for salvation. In this case, the crowds wanted political deliverance. That’s the intent of **Psalm 118:25** that we read a moment ago. What they said was accurate in the sense that they acknowledged the Son of David could save. So on the one hand it was a shout of praise that their deliverer had finally come and on the other hand it was a plea for Him to save them.

First of all we see that it’s a name of prophecy.

A. It’s A Name of Prophecy

They were right in calling Jesus the Son of David. This was the most common title used that refers to the Messiah. One source says it occurs 10 times, another 12 times and still another 14 times. No matter which source you go with, what is clear is that they all point to one person being the only one to lay claim to that title and that is Jesus.

Looking at both the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, we see Jesus had the legal right to the throne through Joseph who was of the line of Solomon and the royal right to the throne through Mary who was of the line of Nathan, both who were sons of David. Parallel lines ran simultaneously coming together with Joseph and Mary making Jesus the only viable person to be called Messiah, **“the Son of David.”**

This promise began back in **Genesis 3:15**. In spite of the curse God placed on Adam and Eve for their sin of disobedience, He promised that an offspring of Eve would come to redeem them from sin. He pictured it with the animal sacrifice He made to cover their naked bodies.

Then throughout the Old Testament the prophecies and promises regarding the Messiah became much narrower in describing who this Messiah would be. **Numbers 24:17** says He would come from the line of Jacob.

Isaiah 11:1 says He would be born from the family of Jesse.

II Samuel 7:12-13 says He would be the one to establish a permanent throne from David's line.

Micah 5:2 says He would be born in Bethlehem.

Isaiah 7:14 says He would be born of a virgin.

Psalms 72:10 says He would be worshiped and given gifts at His birth.

Isaiah 11:1 says He would be called a Nazarene.

Zechariah 9:9 says He would be called a King.

When the Magi rolled into Jerusalem after His birth asking to see the baby born king of the Jews, the religious leaders knew the prophecies and could give them the approximate location of where He was born, just not the actual address.

And when Jesus rode into Jerusalem that day, their acknowledgment of Him as the Son of David was more than just ancestral in nature that He was from David's lineage. They believed Him to be the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament centuries earlier. No wonder they were jubilant. Hurray, our deliverer is finally here.

Unfortunately, He was not the Savior they were expecting. What they missed was that He was the Savior they didn't know they needed.

When you look at Jesus, who is He to you?

What kind of Messiah are you expecting? Even today people have a misunderstanding about the kind of Savior He is.

They want a Savior who can deliver them from trouble when they find themselves in a jam.

They want a Savior who can provide them with tangible things like money to pay a bill or another car to replace their rust bucket.

They want a Savior who can give them health.

And when those things don't happen the way they want them to or in the timing they would like it to happen, their disillusionment leads them to abandon Him. He's not the kind of Savior they want, but He is the Savior they need.

The crowd was right, He was the promised Son of David, a name of prophecy.

Second, it's a name of position.

B. It's A Name of Position

II Samuel 7:12-13

God made a promise to King David that someone from his family tree would sit on the throne forever. It wasn't just about having a successor to the throne. This descendant would rule forever.

Hebrews 1:8

The title or name "**Son of David**" gives Him the right to the throne and worthy of our submission as ruler of all creation and kingdoms. It's a name of position.

The "**Son of David**" is also a name of power.

C. It's A Name of Power

Ephesians 1:18-23

Philippians 2:8-11

I Peter 3:18-22

With this claim to the throne of David comes the power to rule all the nations, and regardless of whether a person will acknowledge Him as Savior, one day everyone will acknowledge Him as Lord and sovereign ruler. Every knee will bow before Him. Every tongue will testify about Him that He is Lord to the glory of God. No one will be excused. No one will be exempt. No one will be excluded.

They were correct in calling Him the "**Son of David**". He had the right to be hailed as their deliverer. Some of our hymns attribute the power that is in His name.

All hail the power of Jesus' name!

Let angels prostrate fall;

Bring forth the royal diadem,

And crown Him Lord of all;

Bring forth the royal diadem,

And crown Him Lord of all!

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And then we see in that the "**Son of David**" is a name of praise.

D. It's A Name of Praise

Revelation 5:9-12

They were right in singing their hosannas to Jesus because He is worthy to receive all our praise and honor. **Revelation 5** says He is worthy because He was slain to purchase men through His blood for God. They would come from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, made into a kingdom of priests to serve God. We sing hymns that depict our praise of His name.

Praise the name of Jesus, Praise the name of Jesus.
He's my Rock, He's my Fortress,
He's my Deliverer, In Him will I trust.
Praise the name of Jesus.

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The **"Son of David"** is a name worthy of praise. He isn't just a physical deliverer who pops out of the bottle when we want Him to grant our requests. He came to give His life in payment for our sin. He came to die for us so that we can have eternal life. If you only praise Him for what you think He can give you in material goods or emotional well-being or physical relief or political deliverance, then your praise is not all that different from those who were around Him headed into Jerusalem.

His is a worthy name.
Second, it is a welcoming name.

II. IT IS A WELCOMING NAME

"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

We first notice in this statement His affirmation.

A. His Affirmation

While they didn't acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God, they at least believed that He came from God. But it was His claim to be equal with God that led the religious leaders to hate Him as they did. That was the accusation at the trial to come when they charged Him with blasphemy because He claimed to be equal to God. These revelers at least acknowledged that He had come from God, even if they did only affirm Him to be a prophet.

As Jesus sat down in conversation with the woman at the well and He revealed her adulterous

relationship she said **"Sir, I can see that you are a prophet."** (**John 4:19**)

When Jesus was approached by Nicodemus he remarked **"Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God."** (**John 3:2**)

When Jesus asked the disciples about what they had heard from the people about who He was, they responded by saying that the word on the street is that He was one of the great prophets: **"John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the other prophets."** (**Matthew 16:13-14**)

To the people marching to Jerusalem, they saw Him as a teacher, a prophet, a miracle worker, but they didn't see Him as the Son of God who came to save them from their sins.

Peter affirmed Jesus's true identity when His follow-up question to the disciples in **Matthew 16**. You have heard what everyone else is saying about Me, **"who do you say I am?"** Are you just like them? Do you agree with the crowd? Peter gave a declaration about who they believed Jesus to be: **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."** (**John 16:15-16**) Peter said Jesus was the Messiah who was God's Son. That is the question we must all answer for ourselves and the declaration we must all make. **Who is Jesus to you?** We must affirm that He is from God, sent to save us from our sins.

It is a welcoming name because of who He is, because of who sent Him, and because of why He was sent. Even though they knew God had sent Him, they missed who He was and why He came.

And along with a welcoming name that affirms who He is comes a welcoming name that shows His authority.

B. His Authority

Any ambassador to another country goes with the authority of the one sending him or her. Jesus was sent to earth to act on behalf of God and for the benefit of God to purchase our salvation. His name comes with authority from God, to do the will of God. But the people wouldn't acknowledge His

authority. But despite their unwillingness to see who He really was it is still a welcoming name. This One who rode into Jerusalem, gave an invitation to all those who were weary and burdened to come to Him to find rest for their souls (**Matthew 11:28-29**).

There is a name I love to hear,
I love to sing its worth;
It sounds like music to my ear,
The sweetest name on earth.

His is a worthy name.
His is a welcoming name.
His is a wonderful name.

III. IT IS A WONDERFUL NAME

It is a wonderful name because it saves.
There is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved.
Many boys were named Jesus in those days, not because they were the anticipated Savior, but because it was a reminder that there was one coming who would save. When the angel spoke to Joseph in a night vision, he told the troubled carpenter not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife because the child she was carrying would be the Savior. He was to be given the name Jesus because He would save His people from their sins. He was the promised Messiah, the promised Redeemer, the promised Savior.
His is the only name that saves.
He is the one whose name will be revered.
There's just something about that name.
The Jews clamoring after Him missed the significance, the wonder of His name.

John MacArthur writes **“The multitude knew who Jesus was, but they did not understand or truly believe what they knew. They were right in their belief that He was the Messiah, “the Son of David,” and that He had come “in the name of the Lord.”** But they were wrong in their belief about the sort of Deliverer He was. They knew He was a king, but they did not understand the nature of His kingship or His kingdom. They did not realize any more than Pilate that the kingdom He came then to

bring was not of this world (**John 18:36**)...The people wanted Jesus on their own terms, and they would not bow to a King who was not of their liking, even though He was the Son of God. They wanted Jesus to destroy Rome but not their cherished sins or their hypocritical, superficial religion. But He would not deliver on their terms, and they would not be delivered on His.

Many people today are open to a Jesus who they think will give them wealth, health, success, happiness, and the other worldly things they want. Like the multitude at the triumphal entry, they will loudly acclaim Jesus as long as they believe He will satisfy their selfish desires. But like the same multitude a few days later, they will reject and denounce Him when He does not deliver as expected.”

Alexander MacLaren makes a good point: **“Unless we know Christ to be the Savior of our souls and the Lamb of God, we shall soon tire of singing hosannas and want a King with more pretensions; but if we have learned who and what He is to us, then let us open our mouths wide, and not be afraid of letting the world hear our shout of praise.”**

I read this week about 20 things that will end with the generation of baby boomers. On the list was church and religion. One person said **“Hopefully, people will eventually understand it's all a sham.”**

Like the multitude at His triumphal entry, that person doesn't know who Jesus really is.

Maybe you have been disillusioned by a false perception of who you think Jesus ought to be. If so, perhaps it's time to get a clear picture of who Jesus really is. The crowd got it right in their heads about Jesus, but their hearts were far from the truth. **How about you?** He's more than just a prophet, He is the Savior who presented Himself as the One to save from sin. The communion table is a wonderful reminder to us of who He is and why He came.