

JERUSALEM WELCOMED THE WORLD'S SAVIOR

I. The Daughter Zion

II. The Savior King

III. Bringing Heaven's Treasures

Matthew 21:1-9

SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 2020 | LENT

SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT

PALM SUNDAY

<i>Old Testament</i>	Zechariah 9:9–12
<i>Psalm</i>	Psalm 24
<i>New Testament</i>	Philippians 2:5–11
<i>Gospel</i>	Matthew 21:1–9

NON-COMMUNION

Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary

The Entrance Hymn – 277 All Glory, Laud, and Honor

The Confirmation Hymn—508 vv. 1-3 Arm These Thy Soldiers, Mighty Lord (Tune of 589)

The Closing Hymn—280 Ride On! Ride On, in Majesty

Faith & Our Savior Lutheran Churches
Medford & Grants Pass, Oregon
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Matthew 21:1–9 (CSB)

21 When they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage at the Mount of Olives, Jesus then sent two disciples, ² telling them, “Go into the village ahead of you. At once you will find a donkey tied there with her colt. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them at once.”

⁴ This took place so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled:

⁵ Tell Daughter Zion,

“See, your King is coming to you,
gentle, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt,

the foal of a donkey.”,

⁶ The disciples went and did just as Jesus directed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and its colt; then they laid their clothes on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their clothes on the road; others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them on the road. ⁹ Then the crowds who went ahead of him and those who followed shouted:

Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is he who comes in the name
of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!

Dear fellow Redeemed: What’s important? What is important to you? What is important to you today as opposed to a month ago? A guy named Maslow conceived of the “hierarchy of needs,” which is a fancy way of saying that if you are starving, you won’t be much interested in what movie is opening next week or what celebrity was arrested recently.

Jesus was about 2000 years ahead of Maslow when he talked about the “worries, riches, and pleasures of life” that would crowd out God’s word, and so crowd out true and saving faith in the One who is our true hope and salvation.

But the fact is that whether in sorrow or joy, pleasure or pain, confidence or fear, the gospel message, the essence of Gods relationship with you, remains of paramount importance.

So, whatever you are going through today, protective isolation, a day of many blessings – or even if you were sick and dying, this gospel is important:

JERUSALEM WELCOMED THE WORLD’S SAVIOR

I. The Daughter Zion

II. The Savior King

III. Bringing Heaven’s Treasures

I. The Daughter Zion

Let me tell you why.

Jesus’ disciples went to Judea expected that He would be killed. They thought in terms of a victim of the Jews’ envy and hatred. They figured Jesus would be found out, thrown into prison and, perhaps like John the Baptist, kept until the crowds quieted down and then killed. But Jesus talked about it differently, **“saying, *“It is necessary that the Son of Man suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day.”*”** (Luke 9:22, CSB)

They thought of Jesus as victim. Not so! Jesus was the one giving himself over to the cross. He was in charge. Jesus faced the of the Jews’ murderous intent having just raised the dead, after all. Now, in what world is King and Lord of Life unimportant?

Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead. John tells us that crowds had gone to Bethany to see Lazarus, and they were now the ones who “followed after” Jesus into Jerusalem. Then there were those who “went ahead” of him, **“the large crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they took palm branches and went out to meet him. They kept shouting: *“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!”*”** (John 12:12–13, CSB)

Jesus was no victim to be caught, imprisoned, and secretly executed. He is the One Zion looked for, so now ... ⁵ **Tell Daughter Zion, "See, your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."**

"Zion" is a figure of speech, meaning the church, believers.¹ You are the daughter of Zion. You are one who lives in hope. Whether you enjoy all the delights of life, and know they are just a shadow of the true joys and delights of heaven and the resurrection, or you live in fear, and sorrow, and misery and look forward to the deliverance of the Lord, you are Zion, and your King is coming to you, and now has come, to save you.

We see both His divine and his human natures paired here. In his humanity, He walks down from Bethphage, across the Kidron valley and rides a donkey into the city. In His divine omniscience and omnipotence creates the circumstances to fulfil the prophecy of Zechariah.

II. The Savior King

This business of finding the donkey and the willing owner was "providential" as we say; it was part of the Lord's management of life. Even as a true man, He is our king, and The Father ... ***"He exercised this power in Christ by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens—far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he subjected everything under his feet and appointed him as head over everything for the church,"*** (Ephesians 1:20–22, CSB) So now, instead of providing beasts of burden for His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, He, in His providence, provides for the church. So as you face the troubles of life, ***"We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."*** (Romans 8:28, CSB)

He exercised His divinity in humility, and even now it is indirectly through His providence, His watchful care, and His loving power. Do not think, when you are safe and healthy, that it is just luck, or when you are sick, that it was bad luck, for even in our troubles our Lord works good.

He came into this world as he came into Jerusalem. He comes in humility and not in judgment. Many is the time that we have talked about this. For the Lord to appear unhidden, in divine power is to be the end of all things and the judgment of all souls. But this is put off for a while (How long? O Lord come quickly!) in favor of His coming in humility so that He may be our Savior.

As Lord of life, He came into this world that He may die and defeat death. He entered into Jerusalem to be captured by the Jews, turned over to the Romans, and crucified. Thereby on the tree of the cross he overcame the Devil who overcame our first parents by the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

¹ Jesus fulfilled the prophet's words so conspicuously that all physically present on that occasion and all of us present in spirit now might recognize and acknowledge him as the kind of Messiah or Christ he wants to be for all men, one who matches Zechariah's prophetic picture. "Say to the daughter of Zion." If we go back to Zechariah 9:9, we find a double summons there: "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem!" One term explains the other. Zion is the same as Jerusalem. Originally, Zion was the name of the site on which Jerusalem was built. Then it was narrowed down to designate the highest point of the city. The reader should note, however, that this was not where the temple was built. It was erected on a lower hill, called Mount Moriah, which we recognize as the eminence on which Abraham had been fully prepared to sacrifice Isaac. (Genesis 22:2) Finally, Zion or Mount Zion came to be used for the whole city of Jerusalem.

In New Testament times the name Zion, or Mount Zion, was employed for the new people of God or the new Israel, in other words, the Christian church. (See Hebrews 12:22, 23; 1 Peter 2:6.) In Revelation 14:1 Mount Zion is the place where the Lamb (Christ) is surrounded by all the saints in glory.

Franzmann, W. H. (1998). Bible history commentary: New Testament (electronic ed., pp. 601–603). Milwaukee, WI: WELS Board for Parish Education.

III. Bringing Heaven's Treasures

Because it was the daughter of Zion, the church that greeted Him as the King coming to her. And because He was here showing Himself as the Savior King, many spoke the truth about Christ. **Hosanna**, they cried. "Lord Save Us." Oh, that people in our age of the world would learn that word, "Hosanna." It is a cry of repentance, a cry of needing help that only the Divine Savior King can give.

But in our day, there is precious little repentance, and precious little acknowledgment of the Lord. Still people worship their false gods. Government, for one. We hear "If we had just been in power!" What then, eternal health and prosperity? When has humanity ever succeeded in that? Or the god of the world itself, offended by our misdeeds, as one former world leader said (paraphrasing) "this is what comes of not recognizing our role in changing the world's climate. Repent!" Not to the Living God, but to His creature.

Hosanna, indeed, as God's subjects and as His creatures we should cry every day. Lord Save! For we have sinned! Have mercy!

And not just "Hosanna," but "Hosanna to the Son of David," the true Savior King who is the unique descendent of David, and who will ascend the throne of David in Heaven, Who will judge and save, give life and damnation, take to Himself and cast off forever.

And not just "Hosanna," but "Hosanna in the Highest Heaven." For we join with the angels of heaven and all the saints, those who have died in faith. We join in their eternal song now, and in the eternal joys of the resurrection hereafter.

But perhaps, for us, the sweetest phrase for us to sing is this: "Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord!" By "blessed" is meant that He is the one blessed (chosen, anointed) by God, not just to receive, but blessed to be the One coming to this world to pour out the treasures of heaven: Mercy, forgiveness, grace, life, salvation, the resurrection unto eternal life.

The greatest treasure, the Son of the Father, was given as a blessing to this world to redeem us from our sins. He lived the life that won God's own approval, "In Him I am well pleased." And having lived the righteousness that He gives to us by faith, He poured out His life and blood to atone for our sins, so that you are given the innocence of Christ Himself.

And the treasures continue to pour out through Him today. Light to see and know the truth. Grace, the unmerited love of God. Forgiveness, so that we are reconciled to God. Life, life like the Risen One himself, body and soul.

In His providence, through this pandemic God has put the world on notice of our mortality. As fragile as is our prosperity, our health, even our life, our Savior King is shown to be our hope in life and in death. I assure you, He hears our prayers with mercy.

It is my prayer that you are warm, safe, comfortable, healthy, and prosperous. I pray that you will remain so, despite the storm of fear that surrounds us. But whatever your situation I can point you to our true Hope, our Savior king. He has come in the name of the Lord, Yahweh, Creator and Preserver of all. He has poured out heaven's treasures to you – forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Be at peace, in Him is the Hope of the world.

AMEN. This is most certainly true.