

# Matthew 21:1-17 // Jesus' Great Entrance

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Date: 13 April 2025

Preacher: Robbie Laidlaw

[ 0 : 00 ] And he said, And did as Jesus had instructed them.

They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

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 heaven!

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.

Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. It is written, he said to them, My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making a den of robbers.

[ 1 : 27 ] The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did, and the children shouting in the temple courts, Hosanna to the Son of David!

They were indignant. Do you hear what these children are saying? They asked him. Yes, replied Jesus. Have you never read, from the lips of children and infants, you Lord have called forth your praise?

And he left them, and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night. Thanks very much, Ali. Morning, everyone. My name is Robbie.

I'm the children and youth pastor here at St. Silas. Boys and girls, if there's anyone here and you want to come to the front, you're so welcome. We realise there's not... Yeah, great. Come on down, come on down.

We love doing these all-age services for two reasons. One, we believe that God's word is for everyone, and can be taught to everyone all at once. Hence why we do these services. So this is...

[ 2 : 25 ] If you're someone who thinks, oh, an all-age service, not ideal. I promise you what I'm about to say matters to you, just as much as it does to our kids down the front. So that's just something for you to all be aware of.

Because God's word means... It's everything for everyone who follows him. So I'm glad we've got kids on the front. It just means that we have a song in the middle, right? When James said I'm doing multiple talks, I'm doing one talk with a song in the middle.

Please don't think I'm going to be here for like 45 minutes with four different talks. No one wants that, me included. So, as James said, it's Palm Sunday, right? A great entrance can tell you everything you need to know about someone.

Now, some first entrances are amazing. Think of maybe your favourite movie or your favourite character. One of the best entrances I can ever think of is of Darth Vader, one of the scary ones. This is from Rogue One, but it's true in the first Star Wars as well. It's dark. The smoke comes out of the door, and all you see is that red lightsaber pull-out. You know this guy is bad. Darth Vader's entrance tells you everything you need to know about him.

[ 3 : 31 ] Or maybe you guys have seen the movie Encanto. Encanto opens with the wonderful song, The Family Madrigal, where Mirabelle, who's on the screen, she tells us, she sings a song of her family.

She explains who everyone is. She explains the wonderful gifts they have. Her sister is super strong. Her aunt can change the weather according to her moods. But at the end of the song, at the end of her grand entrance into this movie, realise that Mirabelle doesn't have a gift.

And all of a sudden, everything you need to know about Mirabelle, is told in the way she enters the movie. Today, we are looking at Jesus' great entrance into Jerusalem.

Now, we're in chapter 21 of Matthew, but this is actually, in Matthew's Gospel, the first time he enters the city. And Jesus, as he enters the city, wants to make sure that his entrance tells everyone who sees him exactly who he is.

So that's what we're going to do this morning. We're going to find out who is Jesus and why has he come to Jerusalem. Before we dig in, let me pray. So this is how we pray. Remember, we stretch out really wide. Come on, everyone do it with me. We stretch out really wide. Let me clap off our heads.

[ 4 : 39 ] We go down past our eyes, close our eyes. Past our mouth, close our mouth. And then we're going to bow our heads and we're going to pray to God. Father, thank you for your words. Thank you that we can gather together to learn from you and about you.

Help us to see who Jesus is and what that means for us today. In Jesus' name, amen. So the first thing we're going to see is that Jesus is the promised king who has come to save.

Now, as I said, we're in chapter 21 of Matthew. There's been some amazing things that Jesus has done so far, but he's not been in Jerusalem. So this is a pretty big moment. Jesus is entering the capital city, the city of David.

So far up in Matthew, Jesus has been telling his disciples, don't tell people who I am. Keep it quiet who I am. But once again, chapter 21 is the moment where that changes.

To make a point, right, Jesus does something quite strange, something quite unusual. Jesus says, I'm going to go into the royal city. I'm going to try and show people the king. I'm going to get a donkey to ride in on.

[ 5 : 45 ] That's quite weird. If I were a king making my royal entrance into my royal city, I would get like the biggest, coolest horse I ever could get or like a sports car, but Jesus didn't have those.

But no, Jesus chose a donkey. Why would he choose a donkey? Well, he did it because Jesus wants to help us remember an Old Testament promise.

James read out at the start of our service. Matthew tells us it in verse five. So if you could look with me down at your Bibles, that'd be really helpful. Matthew quotes Zechariah 9, chapter 9, verse 9.

Say to daughter Zion, see your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Jesus really wanted people to remember that promise and see who he is. So he dresses accordingly. Now there are lots of people we can identify by what they're wearing as to what their jobs are.

So can I get my two volunteers to come up just now, please? That'd be really helpful. Wesker and Heather, thank you. It was a very simple game. I have here two lovely bags with two lovely costumes and we're going to play a game.

[ 6 : 54 ] I'm going to dress up Wesker in this one and then I've got one for Heather and we're going to guess what job are they dressed for. Okay? So here we have first, there we go, Wesker, you put that on. Lovely apron.

This is my apron from home. Here we go. We're going to do this next, please, Wesker. Thank you. Lovely hat. There's already some whispers down the front of what the job might be. Lastly, interesting.

And if you can take this one as well, please, Wesker. There we go. Right. Apron with chef's hat.

What do you think Wesker is dressed up as? Shout it out. Chef! He is dressed up as a chef.

Brilliant. Nice and simple. Right, here we go. This one is slightly harder and I hope you just roll with me because I couldn't find the hat. Okay, Heather, take this first, please. There we go. Put that one on. We've got high-vis vests, very important for safety.

And then we've got, there's already some whispers down the front. If we could put these on after, please. Thank you, Heather. Some lovely gloves. And just to top off our brilliant costume, a mallet and a measuring tape.

[ 7 : 59 ] There we go. What do we think Heather's dressed up? The builder. Specifically, Bob the Builder. Yes. Thanks, Heather. So it's quite simple, this, isn't it?

Chef's hat, apron, whisk, chef. High-vis jacket, hammer, safety gloves, builder slash Bob. Really easy, isn't it? When you see what someone is dressed like, you know what they're going to do.

Guys, that's all I need you for. Thank you so much. Chuck stuff back in the bag. Thank you very much. So that's a really simple point, isn't it? If I see someone dressed like a baker or a chef, they're obviously a chef. Builder, builder.

Fireman, fireman. Really simple, right? See if I was an Israelite back in Jesus' day and I saw a man going into Jerusalem, riding a donkey, I'm going to think king. Because that's what this promise told us.

That's what Zechariah promised the people, that a king would enter Jerusalem, riding a donkey. So for us, it might seem strange, but Jesus knew exactly what he was doing when he chose to ride a donkey.

[ 8 : 59 ] Jesus is deliberately telling everyone, with his great entrance into Jerusalem, he is the king, the long-promised king.

Now, this is different to most promises. There are so many promises that Jesus fulfilled in his life. But this one, Jesus chose to do it. He sent his disciples to get the donkey.

He made them bring it back. This was him declaring something. Other promises, you know, Jesus couldn't choose where he was born. He couldn't choose his parents. He couldn't choose what the king would do to the babies in his hometown as he was taken to Egypt as a baby.

Yet all of those were promises about the king. So as Jesus rides his donkey, surrounded by great crowds, he is saying, I am the king.

And the people who are with him start treating him like a king. You see, in the story, if you look down with me, they start to take off their jackets and they lay them in front of him so the donkey can climb over.

[ 10 : 00 ] They chop the branches off the trees and lay them down too. The crowd are making a makeshift red carpet so this royal king would have a royal entrance. But they're not happy with just their red carpet.

No, they start shouting amazing things. Hosanna to the son of David. That's a kingly name. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

That's Psalm 118. A psalm all about the king. And lastly, Hosanna in the highest heaven, which is basically what they would shout out to the king in praise of who he is.

It's hard to imagine how loud it must have been as these thousands of people were all chanting and shouting for Jesus. Sometimes it's really hard to put ourselves into the story and imagine what it would be like.

So it's Palm Sunday. It's tradition. We're going to do it. We're going to try and recreate what it would feel like to be with Jesus. And what that means is, I hope you're all nice and warmed up after singing because we're going to shout out some of these things.

[ 11 : 04 ] And I can see people in the back thinking, I hate this bit about all these services. The amazing thing about this, right? Can I get them on the screen, please, David? We're going to say these three things, right? And even if you don't like doing this for the sake of immersion, these three statements are true things we can cry out in praise to our great King Jesus.

So if all you're doing at the back is saying, you know what? I'm going to just praise Jesus for who he is and shout out this. We're going to do it this way. If you're under the age of 20, hands up if you're under the age of 20. There's some of you.

There's some of you hiding away over there. You're going to shout out the first one. Can I get you guys to shout this out, right? You're going to say it after me. Hosanna to the Son of David. Hosanna to the Son of David.

Brilliant. Thank you. If you're sitting on this half of the room, you're going to sing out or shout out, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Right. That's quite a deep shout. There's some men really giving it some here. I appreciate that. On this side, you're going to do Hosanna in the highest heaven. Hosanna in the highest heaven. Brilliant.

[ 12 : 12 ] Right. That volume is a good like 5 out of 10. I want us to go 10 out of 10. Imagine what it would have been like if Jesus was riding a donkey and we're getting this loud. Okay. So I'm going to count it in 3, 2, 1 and you're all going to shout out what we've just practiced.

3, 2, 1. Hosanna! Keep going. Keep going. Keep going. Keep going. It's all right.

That was good. That was good. That was brilliant. Now, we are maybe around 200 people in this room. Okay. When Jesus was entering Jerusalem, he'd have been surrounded by thousands. So whilst that was quite loud, the noise surrounding Jesus would have been deafening as people cry out to him that he is the king.

Imagine, if you look down to verse 10 with me, the whole city of Jerusalem hear the noise and just go, what the heck? Who is that man? They can't believe it.

Can you imagine if we had kept going and you were even louder and people were coming in off the street being like, what are these nutters doing? Would you be able to tell them we're shouting praise to the king? The thing is with this crowd is it's actually hard to tell what they understood about what it meant that Jesus was king.

[ 13 : 28 ] So they could see a man riding on a donkey. He's the king. Let's cheer for him. But when the city asked, who is this man? They reply with, it's Jesus the prophet of Nazareth from Galilee.

For the people of Israel, the Messiah, that is the long-promised king, they expect them to bring a military victory. They thought they were going to free them from the rule of Rome.

They thought that he was going to restore the kingdom of Israel to how it used to be. The thing is, Matthew in his gospel presents Jesus as he is, not how they expected him to be.

Jesus is the long-promised king, but he is one who is gentle and lowly, meek and kind, the friend of sinners. This is the king who will save his people, but it will be in the most unexpected way.

This is the king who will restore the kingdom, but not on this day, not just yet. Israel had expectations about what kind of king Jesus would be.

[ 14 : 35 ] We do the same, don't we? We have our own expectations of what a king should be like, of what king Jesus should do or look like.

We place our own demands on him. We think it would be much, much better for everyone if Jesus' kingdom was how I want it to be or how you want it to be.

I think it would be much better if Jesus' kingdom were a massively powerful, victorious one where I would get to be powerful and we'd all get to be rich. I'd get to do what I wanted when I wanted because I was with a powerful king and no one could say no to me.

But Jesus isn't the kind of king who wields his power for personal gain. No, he's a gentle king who rules by putting his people first. Boys and girls, if Jesus was all about power, it would be very hard for us to get close to him.

None of us are powerful or impressive. None of us have done anything that warrants being close to the king of all creation. We're all weak sinners, broken, in need of fixing, in need of a savior.

[ 15 : 44 ] It is good for us that Jesus is not the king we want, but he is the king that we need. Just because we want power and influence does not mean that is what is good for us.

Instead, we need a savior who has come not to fight a military war or to rule with an iron fist, but a savior who's come to die that he might win the spiritual war against sin that we are all struggling with.

You see, that final battle was fought at the cross, but it was won when he rose again and there was an empty tomb. Jesus took all of our sins and he paid the price for them so that we could be made like him and rise again.

This unexpected yet long-promised king, well, he's leading us into a life that he wants for us. Now, Jesus made it very clear. He is the long-promised king, the gentle one who rides on a donkey, who has come to save us and bring peace.

This is some of the best news we could ever hear. And sometimes when we hear good news, the only right response is that we sing loud and with joy. So we're going to do that now. I'm going to invite the band up.

[ 16 : 56 ] We're going to sing a new song. I'm going to invite Catherine up. We've got some brilliant actions. This is the catchiest song. It's going to be in your head all week. So everyone get on your feet and everyone do the actions as best you can because it really draws us together.

So we'll play through the chorus and the verse and then we'll go back to the beginning again. And for our ground floor. We'll be right back.

I will hold you the last thing that's for me When I'm broken He will fix me I am all on the name of the Lord All my life, all I know God's been good, good to my soul Mountain high, high below I'm going to stay wherever I go God is glory He's not against me I won't want to live as He has for me When I'm broken He will fix me I will call on the name of the Lord He's all my life, all I know God's been good

I'm broken My soul Mountain high, valley low I'm going to stay wherever I go  
He's my heart Soul In my sorrow He's my hope When my strength forms in quarrel When the  
storms rise all around me I will call on the name of the Lord If all my life fall, I know God's been  
good, good to my soul Grows in high, I'll be low I'm gonna stay wherever I go I've got joy, joy, joy  
Deep in my soul I will sing, sing, sing Wherever I go All my life, all I know  
God's been good, good to my soul Mountain eye, valley low I'm gonna stay wherever I go All my  
life, all I know God's been good, good to my soul Mountain eye, valley low I'm gonna stay wherever  
I go Amazing. Well done, everyone. Sit down, sit down.

[ 20 : 26 ] That's the catchiest song. It's been in my head since I first heard it. So, we are singing  
with joy because Jesus is the long-promised king who has come to save. His entrance into  
Jerusalem told us that.

Now, we might expect when Jesus enters as a king that he's gonna go to a palace. Maybe he's  
gonna meet the most important people in the city.

But instead, he goes to the temple. And he enters the temple for the first time. Now, it gets a bit  
dramatic here. It's quite tense. Jesus starts to do something weird.

He drives people out of the temple. He starts flipping tables. This is not a sight of Jesus we have  
seen before. Now, it's important. Let me explain very briefly.

Why is the temple important? Well, the temple was God's house. It was where God dwelled. It was  
where he lived. And people went there to offer sacrifices both in praise of God to thank him for what  
he's done and also as an offering for their sin that they might be made clean again before God.

[ 21 : 35 ] Now, often, people would travel very, very far to get to the temple. Some people walked  
over 100 miles. Guys, have you ever walked over 100 miles in a journey? No, very unlikely.

All shaking our heads. Neither have I. Some of us have maybe done it, but you're weird. The thing  
is, right, we can often think that when Jesus drives out the money changers and the dove sellers,  
the sacrifice sellers, that they are inherently wrong to do those things, right?

That isn't actually the problem here. Because these people had traveled so far away, they needed  
to buy sacrifices. They needed to buy their doves or their oxes or whatever they had.

Have you ever tried to travel with a pair of doves in a cage? It's very difficult. And I can't even  
imagine how hard it is to drag an ox over 100 miles if that's where you're going to sacrifice. They've  
come from so far away.

It's like when we go to Spain, we need to change our money, right? The problem is not what the  
people were doing. The problem is where they were doing it. Look with me at verse 13 here. Jesus  
was angry that God's house, the temple, was no longer being used as a house of prayer, but  
instead was a den of robbers.

[ 22 : 47 ] The place that was so sacred, that was built for people to praise and worship God, had  
turned into this loud, chaotic place where people were selling things and it was stopping people  
praying.

These people are misusing the temple. That's the important thing to manage here, right? Let's see,  
I've got something to help us understand that idea. Here are two things, two of my favorite things,  
right?

What's this? Hairbrush. What do we use a hairbrush for? Brushing hair. Nice and simple. Make you  
look nice. My hairdresser would be happy if I brushed my hair regularly. I tell you who wouldn't be  
happy, if I took this hairbrush designed for brushing hair and started using it as a toothbrush.  
Put toothpaste on it, rub away. That's not going to work very well. My hairdresser would be mad. My  
dentist would probably be even more mad. I'd be taking something and using it wrongly and I'd be  
upsetting the people who want to use it.

What is this? It's a book. Brilliant. What do we use books for? Reading. Perfect. If I were to use this  
book right, I would read it. I'd read all about how great Jesus is.

[ 23 : 59 ] That's what this book's about. If I were to take this book and try and wear it as a hat,  
would that work well? Do you think I can walk fast with this on my head? No, it would fall off.

It's going to fall off very quickly unless I walk really slowly and then I'm never going to make my 100  
miles to the temple. Would it work if I wore this as gloves? No, it's a book.

If I'm not using it to read like a book, then I'm not using it right. And that's wrong. That's not what it's  
there for. That's exactly what the people who ran the temple were doing.

They were taking something that was made to worship God and pray to him and offer sacrifices and using it for something that it was not made for.

They turned it into this big marketplace where they cared about money above all else. So that's what the problem is here. They're misusing the temple. But there's a bit more to it than that.

[ 24 : 57 ] Jesus quotes Jeremiah chapter 7. Right? Jeremiah, when he first spoke those words, was he was judging the people who would act like robbers and criminals in their lives and yet run to the temple and say, it's okay, I love God, I'm in the temple, it's okay.

So they would use this good thing to get rid of their bad thing. They would use the temple, which is a place to act good, even though they were doing very bad things.

You see, King Jesus went straight to the temple because he wanted to show people that that was not how you're meant to worship God. They were doing it wrong.

They were misusing what God had given them. The temple was not a place to worship God anymore, but instead a place for bad people to hide. They didn't love God for God.

They instead used him as an excuse for their love of money or power or to glorify themselves. Boys and girls, it is a very, very bad thing to misuse something God has given us to put ourselves first.

[ 26 : 05 ] We see just how bad it is in the aftermath of all the flipping tables. So he flips the tables, he clears out the buyers and the sellers, and all of a sudden, they're replaced by the blind and the lame.

The people who can't see and the people who can't walk. And what happens in response to the wonderful things that Jesus does when he heals them? Well, the children shout out again, Hosanna to the son of David.

The boys and girls who were in the temple were doing something huge. You see, these kids, probably no older than you guys, were able to see who Jesus is, and they were giving him the praise he deserved as the promised king.

Jesus entered the temple and flipped the whole thing upside down. It was all of a sudden back to front because the youngest were suddenly the ones with the best theology. They understood the most.

But the people who were supposedly the smartest, they didn't like it. They were indignant. They were angry. These are the men who are meant to know best. They knew their scripture.

[ 27 : 11 ] So they ran to Jesus, complaining. They looked down on the kids, and they assumed, these kids know nothing, Jesus. Are you hearing what they're saying? Jesus' response is kind of amazing.

Jesus says to these priests that God has shown them who he is. He quotes Psalm 8 to kind of prove that. Poison girls, right? Down the front. And anyone who's not come to the front, right? What this means is, even though you are young and smaller than everyone else, you've not finished school yet, what we're hearing here is that you can know exactly who Jesus is.

You can love him and trust him when you see that. To follow Jesus, you don't have to be old enough or smart enough or tall enough or anything enough. To follow Jesus, all you have to know is that he is your king who died to save you and trust him with everything.

There is no age limitation. Every single one of us can follow Jesus. Isn't that amazing? After that mic drop to the priests, Jesus leaves.

[ 28 : 22 ] That seems quite strange. After one of the greatest entrances into the city in history, after one of the most disruptive things where Jesus flips the whole temple system upside down, he walks out.

Why? Well, Jesus did these things to show us two things about himself. The first, he is the promised king who will ride the donkey like the gentle king he is to come and save us.

But the second thing we learn from the temple is Jesus, the promised king, will confront people who think they represent God but only represent themselves. You see, this may not have seemed gentle, but that's because we often think gentle means weak.

But gentleness and weakness are not the same. Jesus does what is right for his father's house and yet remains gentle and lowly. The priests were leading Israel away.

They were stopping people from praying to God. They thought that their religion would keep them right. They thought by going at the right times of year and the right times of week and doing the right things they have always done, they would be made right with God.

[ 29 : 36 ] But just like in Jeremiah, they were actually rejecting God by their life. They were doing bad things and using God to cover it up. They were using him like a get out of jail free cards.

I can live how I want normally. I can be all about me but as long as I come and give my sacrifice, I'll be okay. That's not what it means to love God. That's not what it means to follow him.

Some of us might think that because you're here this morning, you've made it out that then everything's okay. We might think church is like our get out of jail free cards. But doing something for the sake of doing something will never save us.

In fact, relying on our own actions will only ever take us further away from our gentle king who has done everything for us. Jesus hated this false religion of the chief priests and the teachers of the law.

He literally came to flip it upside down just like the tables. No longer do we have to do anything or make sure we act in a certain way. All we have to do is trust that Jesus is the king.

[ 30 : 43 ] And everyone can do it from the littlest ones here or in the creche all the way up to the oldest ones here, the wisest. Jesus' gentle nature means that every single one of us can turn to him trusting that he will forgive us, that he has died for us.

He welcomes every single one of you to come to him. This gentleness will not last forever. Palm Sunday is not the last time we see one of the great entrances of Jesus.

The next time it happens, well, he won't be gently riding a donkey. Instead, just as Revelation 19 tells us, Jesus will be on a great white horse whose rider is called Faithful and True.

With justice he judges. His eyes are like blazing fire and on his head are many crowns. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood and his name is the word of God.

This is the Jesus who will enter the world on his second coming. A ferocious warrior king who is coming to defeat his enemies and judge the whole world. On that day we will have two options.

[ 31 : 50 ] We'll have two places to stand. There'll be two groups of people. One will be with the chief priests who are trusting in their own actions, their traditions, their own attitudes. And then the other will be like with the little children who look to Jesus as their king and say, Hosanna to the son of David.

The thing is, in that day where we stand, where every single one of us stands, well, we won't get to decide on that day. You don't get to wait until the great horse, the great rider whose name is the words, whose horse is called Faithful and True.

We will not get to wait until we see that to choose which camp we're in. What camp we're in matters according to how we live today. How we respond to him now as our king.

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem tells us that he is the long-promised king sent by God to save his people. His time in the temple tells us that he really is the one who will judge those who have rejected God.

But he is gentle and kind. He will welcome any of us who turn to him now. He has died to save us. He has washed us clean in the blood that his robe will be dipped in.

[ 33 : 08 ] Turn to him now. Trust him. Let's keep our eyes firmly on our king and cry out with the little children, Hosanna be to the son of David. Let's pray together. Father God, we thank you that you have sent your son, that he is the long-promised king, that he will rule the world with justice and equity.

Lord, we pray that as we see him now on Palm Sunday, we will rejoice that he has come as a gentle king who we can all approach and for whom that he has died for all of us, all of our sins on the cross.

Help us to reflect on that this week, Lord, that we might not on that final day be standing with the chief priests, but instead we'll be standing with the little children, deeply in love with you and rejoicing at your second coming.

Lord, we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.