



GROWTH GROUP QUESTIONS

April 2, 2023 – “Who Is This Jesus”

CONTEXT

The crowds of people are making their way to Jerusalem for Passover and Jesus is amongst them. Right before Jesus enters, some blind men cry out to him to have mercy on them. Not surprisingly, Jesus notices and stops. He asks them what they want him to do for them. They respond by saying “we want to see.” Jesus reached out and touched their eyes and they received their sight. They then proceeded to join the crowd that was making their way into Jerusalem for Passover. Jesus is no longer telling people that he has healed to not share what has happened. knows his time has come.

The Mount of Olives is significant in messianic expectations which can be seen in Zechariah 14:4. Matthew 21:5 is also a direct quote of Zechariah 9:9. Yet, Jesus will reinterpret what it means to be a king and the Messiah. Instead of an armed soldier or ruler riding in on a war horse, Jesus arrives on a young donkey. The crowd recognizes the messianic expectations of what is happening, but they don't seem to notice that Jesus is riding on a donkey.

Cloaks are placed on the animals and the crowd places their cloaks on the ground. There is a connection here to King Jehu in 2 Kings 9. Matthew's account does not say palm branches, but John 12 says that people were waving palm branches. John 12:1 also provides the dating of this entrance as the Sunday before the Friday Passover.

Verse 10 says that the whole city was “stirred.” This word is used later in Matthew in a much more forceful way. In Matthew 27:51 when Jesus is crucified, we read that the earth “shook” and in Matthew 28:2 on the day of resurrection, we read that there was a violent “earthquake”. The same root word is used in all three circumstances. Matthew is trying to let the reader know that the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem is a “ground shaking” event.

As the crowd makes their way into Jerusalem with Jesus the question is asked...”who is this?” The response from others is that Jesus is a prophet from Nazareth which in one sense is true.



However, as often happened, the crowd underestimated who Jesus truly was. Over the next week and then over the next several months and years people would realize that Jesus was the Messiah – the Son of God – who had come to redeem his people and world.

Scriptures:

Matthew 21:1-11

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. 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 right away.” 4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

5 “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”[a]

6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. 8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, “Hosanna[b] to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”[c] “Hosanna[d] in the highest heaven!”

10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” 11 The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Matthew 20:29-34

29 As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. 30 Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” 31 The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” 32 Jesus stopped and called them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. 33 “Lord,” they answered, “we want our sight.” 34 Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

Matthew 16:13-16

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” 14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Matthew 16:21-23

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. 22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!” 23 Jesus turned and



said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

Jeremiah 32:17

17 “Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

Questions:

1. Pastor Paul began this week’s sermon with two scriptures from the Old Testament that foretold Jesus. There are over 300 Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. Can you identify five of these prophecies that were fulfilled by Jesus?
2. The life of Jesus is detailed in the first four books of the New Testament. What do we learn in these four books that can help us answer the question: “Who is this Jesus”?
3. Who did Jesus, himself, say that He was? What scripture references give you the answer to this question?
4. The New Testament includes many different names and titles of Jesus. How do these different names and titles help us to better understand who Jesus is?
5. In Matthew 16:21-23, we see Simon Peter’s response to Jesus’ explanation that Jesus must go to Jerusalem to be killed and then resurrected. Pastor Paul told us that Simon Peter’s response to Jesus then is much like our response to Jesus today when we show a tendency to limit the power of Jesus in our lives. Why do you think we behave in this way?
6. How do you know if you have made Jesus too small in your life?
7. What can you do to broaden your understanding of how big Jesus can be in your life?
8. In a few sentences, how do you answer the question: “Who is this Jesus”?

