

MAIN LESSON, ACTIVITY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Ages 5-11 | Scripture-Centered | Christ-Centered | Printable-Ready

LESSON OVERVIEW

Week Number:	13
Date:	March 29, 2026
Lesson Title:	Jesus the Promised King Enters Jerusalem
Primary Scripture:	Matthew 21:1-11
Bible Timeline:	Holy Week begins. Jesus enters Jerusalem as the promised King just days before He dies on the cross for our sins and rises again.

BIG IDEA

Jesus is the promised King who came humbly to save sinners.

MEMORY VERSE

***“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.’”***

Matthew 21:5

This verse helps us see that Jesus is the King God promised long before. He did not come by accident. He came exactly as God said He would. He is gentle, humble, and good, yet He is also the true King.

SETTING THE SCENE (INTRODUCTION)

Before we begin, let's remember what the Bible is. The Bible is God's true and trustworthy Word. It has 66 books, written by more than 40 authors, over about 1,500 years, across three continents, and in three languages. Yet it tells one unified account. From beginning to end, the Bible shows us the one true God and His plan to save sinners through Jesus Christ.

Today we are not reading a made-up tale. We are reading about a true event that happened in history. This event is part of Holy Week, the week when Jesus went to the cross for our sins and then rose again.

Let's listen to what God tells us in His Word. In Matthew 21:5 we read, "See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey." God had promised that His King would come, and today we will hear how Jesus fulfilled that promise.

Long before this moment, God promised to send a Savior. All through the Old Testament, God kept pointing His people forward. Then Jesus came. He healed the sick, taught the truth, showed mercy, cast out demons, calmed storms, and proved that He is no ordinary man. He is the Son of God. He is the promised Savior. Now He is coming to Jerusalem, the great city, and He is coming for a reason.

MAIN LESSON NARRATIVE

Imagine a busy road leading up to a big city. People are walking, talking, and hurrying along. Some are with family. Some are carrying things. Some are excited. The city of Jerusalem is full because Passover is near, and many people have come there.

Jesus is walking toward Jerusalem with His disciples. He knows exactly where He is going. He knows exactly what is about to happen. Nothing is a surprise to Him.

Before Jesus reaches the city, He tells two of His disciples to go into a village nearby. He says they will find a donkey and a colt there. A colt is a young donkey. He tells them to bring the animals to Him. If anyone asks why, they should say, "The Lord needs them." That is exactly what happens.

Right away we learn something important. Jesus is in control. He is not confused. He is not guessing. He knows what He is doing because He is Lord.

Then the Bible tells us something very special. This was happening to fulfill what God had said long before through the prophet Zechariah. Matthew 21:5 says, "See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey." That means God had already promised this. Long before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, God said His King would come. And now Jesus is doing exactly what God promised. That helps us trust the Bible. The Bible is God's true Word. What God says, He does.

The disciples bring the donkey and the colt to Jesus. They put their cloaks on them, and Jesus sits on the colt.

Now think about that. If you were making up a parade for a king, you might picture something loud and shiny. Maybe you would think of a tall horse, bright flags, drums, or soldiers marching. But Jesus does not come that way. He comes riding on a donkey.

Why?

Because Jesus is showing what kind of King He is. He is not a mean king. He is not a proud king. He is not a king who pushes people around. He is a gentle King. He is a humble King. He is a good King.

Sometimes children think a strong person must be loud or bossy. But Jesus shows us something better. Real strength is not being mean. Real strength is doing what is right. Jesus is strong enough to heal the sick, calm the storm, and defeat sin and death, and yet He comes gently.

As Jesus rides toward Jerusalem, the crowd begins to do something beautiful. Many people take off their cloaks and spread them on the road. Others cut branches and lay them down too. They are showing honor to Jesus.

Can you picture it? The dusty road is covered with cloaks and branches. People are looking toward Jesus. Some are smiling. Some are shouting. Some are wondering. Everyone can tell that something important is happening.

Then the people begin to cry out with loud voices. Matthew 21:9 says, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

That word "Hosanna" means "save us" or "save now." It is a cry for help, and it is also a shout of praise. The people are not just saying, "Yay, here comes Jesus." They are calling out for rescue. And when they call Him "Son of David," they are saying He is the promised King from David's family line. God had promised long ago that a King would come from David's family. So the people are saying something true about Jesus. Jesus really is the promised King.

But here is something you need to understand. Some people in the crowd knew true words about Jesus, but they still did not fully understand Him. They wanted help. They wanted rescue. But many of them were thinking mostly about the kind of rescue they wanted.

Maybe they wanted an easy life. Maybe they wanted their enemies to go away. Maybe they wanted Jesus to fix everything the way they imagined. You can understand this too. Sometimes a child says, "Help me," but what he really means is, "Make everything go my way." Sometimes we want rescue from hard things, but we do not yet understand our biggest need.

Our biggest need is not getting our favorite seat.

Our biggest need is not getting picked first for a game.

Our biggest need is not having a perfect day.

Our biggest need is being saved from sin.

Sin is every wrong thing we do, say, and think against God. We lie. We disobey. We are selfish. We are unkind. We want our own way. That is why we need more than a helper. We need a Savior. And that is exactly who Jesus is.

When Jesus enters Jerusalem, the whole city feels the excitement. Matthew 21:10 says, "the whole city was stirred." People ask, "Who is this?" That is the biggest question in the lesson.

Who is Jesus?

He is the promised King.

He is the Son of David.

He is the Son of God.

He is the Savior.

Some people in the city answer, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." That is not completely wrong, because Jesus does speak God's truth. But it is not the whole truth. Jesus is more than a prophet. He is the Christ, the promised Messiah, the King God sent.

Now you need to remember where Jesus is going. He is not riding into Jerusalem for a fun parade. He is not there to collect a crown from the crowd. He is not there to become famous. He is going there to die on the cross for sinners.

And you need to know something very important. On Palm Sunday, Jesus already knew His death was near. He knew the cross was coming. He knew the pain was coming. He knew the nails were coming. He knew He would give His life. None of that was hidden from Him.

He knows the hard things are coming. He knows He will be rejected. He knows He will suffer. He knows He will be nailed to the cross. And still He goes.

Why would He do that?

Because He loves sinners. Because He loves us so much. Jesus did not ride into Jerusalem by mistake. He did not come because He was trapped. He came on purpose. He showed up anyway, even though He knew His death was near, because His love is that great. He knew that dying on the cross was the way He would save sinners, and His love for us was so great that He was willing to go all the way to the cross. Because He obeys His Father. Because this was God's plan to save His people.

Think of it this way. Sometimes a child may do something hard because it is loving and right. A big brother might help carry groceries even when his arms get tired. A little girl might share a toy even when she really wants to keep it. That is hard in a small way. But Jesus did something far greater. He chose the hard road because it was the loving road. He went forward to save us.

Palm Sunday is joyful, but it is also serious. So when you hear the people shouting and laying down branches, remember this too: Jesus heard the cheers, but He also knew the cross was near. He knew what it would cost Him to save us, and He came anyway. The branches and shouting are real, but the cross is coming.

That is why this lesson matters so much. Jesus did not come only so people could cheer for Him. He came so sinners could be forgiven. He came so people far from God could be brought near. He came so children and grown-ups could belong to God's family by faith in Him.

And there is more good news. Jesus came the first time in humility, riding on a donkey. But the Bible says He will come again in glory. The first time, He came to save through His death and resurrection. One day He will come again as the victorious King who makes everything right.

So when you hear about Palm Sunday, do not think only about branches in people's hands. Think about the King who came to save. He is gentle. He is holy. He is strong. He is good. He is the King we need.

Maybe you feel afraid sometimes. Jesus is the King you can trust.

Maybe you feel sad because of sin or guilt. Jesus is the Savior who forgives.

Maybe you want to run life your own way. Jesus is the good King whose way is better.

When the people cried, "Hosanna," they were crying for rescue. Jesus answered that cry in the deepest way possible. He went to the cross, died for sin, and rose again.

So let us answer the city's question clearly:

Who is this?

This is Jesus. This is the promised King. This is the Savior. This is the Son of God.

This is the One who came humbly, died willingly, rose victoriously, and will come again.

That means we should do more than just talk about Him. We should trust Him. We should love Him. We should follow Him. And we can say with joy: "Hosanna! Jesus, save us!"

WHY WE CAN TRUST THIS ACCOUNT

We can trust this account because it is God's true Word, and God keeps His promises. Matthew 21:4-5 says this happened to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet. That means Palm Sunday was promised long before it happened. Zechariah 9:9 said God's King would come gentle and riding on a donkey, and Jesus fulfilled that exactly.

We can also trust this account because it is recorded in the Gospels as a real public event in a real city at a real time in history. This did not happen in secret. Jesus entered Jerusalem during Passover, when many people were present. The Bible tells us the city was stirred.

Most of all, we believe this because God tells us in His Word. Scripture comes first. Historical details help, but God's Word is our final authority.

WHAT THIS SHOWS US ABOUT JESUS

This passage shows us that Jesus is the promised King. He is not pretending to be king. He is not hoping to become king. He is the King God promised.

This passage also shows us that Jesus is humble. He entered Jerusalem gently, riding on a donkey, just as God said. His humility is not weakness. It is holy strength.

This passage shows us that Jesus came to save. The crowd cried, "Hosanna," meaning "save us," and Jesus answered that cry through His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead.

This passage points us clearly to the gospel. Palm Sunday leads to Good Friday, and Good Friday leads to Easter Sunday. Jesus is our Savior.

GOD REVEALED AS TRINITY

God is one God in three Persons.

God the Father sent the Son according to His loving plan to save sinners.

God the Son is Jesus, the promised King who entered Jerusalem in humility and truth.

God the Holy Spirit is fully God and always at work in God's saving plan, helping people know the truth about Jesus.

In today's passage, we especially see God the Son, Jesus Christ, entering Jerusalem as King. As we read the whole Bible, we understand that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are always perfectly united in God's plan of salvation.

You can say it like this: God is one God in three Persons.

LIFE APPLICATION

Because Jesus is the true King, we should trust Him, obey Him, and follow Him.

When you feel afraid, remember that your King is gentle and strong.

When you feel guilty over sin, remember that your King came to save sinners.

When you want your own way, remember that Jesus is the good King, and His way is always right.

This week, you can practice following Jesus by telling Him the truth in prayer, obeying quickly, speaking kindly, and remembering that He is not only your helper but your Lord.

DEFENDING THE TRUTH

Question a child might ask: How do we know Jesus really is the promised King and not just someone people were excited about?

Simple biblical answer: We know because God promised long before that His King would come, and Jesus fulfilled that promise. Matthew 21:4-5 points back to Zechariah 9:9. God said the King would come gentle and riding on a donkey, and that is exactly what Jesus did. The Bible fits together because it is God's true Word.

Supporting Scripture: Matthew 21:4-5; Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:25-26

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who entered Jerusalem in today's lesson?

Jesus entered Jerusalem.

2. What was Jesus riding on?

Jesus was riding on a donkey, just as God had promised.

3. What did the people shout?

They shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

4. What does "Hosanna" mean?

"Hosanna" means "save us" or "save now."

5. Why is "Son of David" important?

It shows that Jesus is the promised King from David's family line.

6. Why did Jesus come to Jerusalem?

Jesus came to Jerusalem to obey the Father and go to the cross to save sinners.

7. Was Jesus weak because He came humbly?

No. Jesus was showing holy strength, humility, and obedience.

8. How does Palm Sunday point to Easter?

Palm Sunday begins Holy Week. Jesus entered Jerusalem on His way to die for our sins and rise again.

9. What kind of King is Jesus?

Jesus is the promised King who is holy, gentle, humble, powerful, and good.

10. What should we do because Jesus is King?

We should trust Him, turn from sin, and follow Him.

Optional Deeper Questions

1. Why do you think some people were excited about Jesus but still did not fully understand Him?

Many people wanted Jesus to do what they wanted right away, but Jesus came first to save them from sin. People can be excited about Jesus without yet truly trusting Him.

2. Why is fulfilled prophecy important?

Fulfilled prophecy shows that God keeps His Word and that Jesus really is who the Bible says He is.

3. Why is Jesus better than an earthly king?

Earthly kings can be selfish, sinful, or temporary. Jesus is holy, loving, truthful, and eternal. He saves His people instead of using them.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY: HOSANNA ROAD

Purpose: To help children remember that Jesus is the promised King who entered Jerusalem humbly to save sinners.

Type: Simple group craft and reenactment

Supplies: Strips of paper or construction paper, crayons or pencils, tape, optional green paper for simple branches.

1. Give each child one or two strips of paper.
2. Ask them to write one truth from today's lesson on the paper. Younger children can copy simple words such as "Jesus is King," "Hosanna," or "Jesus saves."
3. Place the papers on the floor in a path to make a "road." If you have green paper, children can also make simple branch shapes.
4. Read Matthew 21:8-9 aloud again.
5. Let children stand beside the paper road and say together, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"
6. Remind them that we are not pretending this is just a parade. We are remembering that Jesus entered Jerusalem on His way to the cross and the resurrection.

Scripture connection: Matthew 21:8-9 shows the crowd spreading cloaks and shouting praise as Jesus entered the city.

TEACHER CLOSING

Read Matthew 21:9 one more time:

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Then say:

Children, today we heard that Jesus is the promised King. He came humbly, gently, and truthfully. He came on purpose. He came to save sinners. When people cried, "Hosanna," they were crying out for rescue, and Jesus answered that cry by going to the cross and rising again.

So when you think about Palm Sunday, remember this: Jesus is the King we need. He is strong enough to save, gentle enough to welcome us, and good enough to trust.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for being the promised King. Thank You for coming humbly to save sinners. Thank You for going to the cross for us and rising again. Help us trust You, follow You, and love You. Amen.