Study Guide: Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Links: https://youtu.be/Z3MfwFTe94E

https://oregoncitychurch.org/podcasts/media/2026-07-19-jesus-enters-jerusalem

Scripture Focus	Preacher	Date
Matthew 21:1011	Alex Gisel	July 19, 2026

Main Theme

God's people must align their expectations with God's purposes rather than expecting God to fulfill their own agenda.

Big Idea

Jesus was the King the people needed, but not the king they expected.

Opening Thought

The crowd that welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem with cries of "Hosanna!" would soon see Him crucified. What changed?

The problem wasn't that Jesus failed. The problem was that many people expected Him to do something different. They wanted a political deliverer who would defeat Rome. Jesus came as a humble King who would defeat sin and death.

We face the same challenge today. Sometimes we expect God to work according to our plans, solve problems on our timeline, or fulfill desires He never promised. This lesson challenges us to trust Christ for who He truly is and to align our expectations with God's revealed will.

Key Scripture

Matthew 21:5

"Behold, your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey."

Why It Matters

This verse captures the heart of the sermon. Jesus fulfilled prophecy exactly as God intended, yet many missed Him because He did not match their expectations.

Sermon Summary

Jesus entered Jerusalem as the promised Messiah, fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy by riding on a donkey. The crowd celebrated His arrival because they expected a king who would restore Israel's power and defeat Rome.

Instead, Jesus came to provide a greater victory over sin and death. The sermon challenges believers to examine their own expectations of God, seek His will through Scripture, prayer, and obedience, and trust Christ's purposes even when they differ from personal desires.

Key Teaching Points

1. Expectations Shape Our Response to God

The people welcomed Jesus when they thought He would fulfill their plans. When He didn't, many rejected Him.

Supporting Scriptures

Matthew 21:1-11; Zechariah 9:9-17

Why It Matters

Ask whether your expectations come from Scripture or personal preference.

Discuss & Reflect

- What did the people expect Jesus to do when He entered Jerusalem?
- How did Zechariah's prophecy help shape expectations about the Messiah?
- What expectations of God have I developed that may not come from Scripture?

2. Jesus Came to Bring a Greater Victory

The crowd wanted political freedom. Jesus came to conquer sin and death.

Supporting Scriptures

Matthew 21:5; Hebrews 13:20-21

Why It Matters

Trust that God's purposes are greater than temporary circumstances.

Discuss and Reflect

- Why was riding on a donkey important to Jesus' message?
- What does the triumphal entry teach us about God's kingdom?
- When has God worked differently than I expected?

3. Learn God's Expectations

Rather than demanding our way, we should seek God's will through His Word.

Supporting Scriptures

John 7:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Discuss and Reflect

- How can expectations help or hinder our faith?
- How can I better learn what God expects of me?

4. Live Out Your Faith Daily

The sermon reminds us that "dying for Christ" is not the hardest challenge. Living for Him every day is.

Supporting Scriptures

Matthew 22:37-39

Discuss and Reflect

- What is one area where I need to trust God's plan more fully?
- What practical step can I take this week to follow Christ more faithfully?

5. Jesus Accomplished What We Could Not

No one perfectly meets God's standards. Christ came to save and transform us.

Supporting Scriptures

Hebrews 13:20-21

Discuss and Reflect

How does Christ's victory over sin and death change the way we view our failures and shortcomings?

This Week's Challenge

Challenge

Each day, read a Gospel passage and ask:

"What does this teach me about who Jesus really is?"

Reflection Question

Where do I need to exchange my expectations for trust in God's purposes?

Prayer Focus

Praise: Thank God for His faithfulness and wisdom.

Thanksgiving: Thank Jesus for defeating sin and death.

Confession: Confess times when you have expected God to follow your plans instead of following His.

Request: Ask God to help you understand His will and trust His purposes.

Commitment: Commit to following Jesus as He truly is.

Family Discussion

1. Why were people excited when Jesus came into Jerusalem?
2. Have you ever expected one thing and gotten something different? What happened?
3. How can we trust God when things do not happen the way we expected?

Leader Notes

Main Idea

Jesus fulfilled God's plan perfectly, but many missed Him because they expected a different kind of King.

Discussion Goal

Help participants recognize how expectations influence their view of God and encourage them to evaluate those expectations through Scripture rather than personal assumptions.

Key Takeaway

Faith grows when we trust God's purposes more than our own expectations.

Next Step

Because Jesus fulfilled God's purpose rather than human expectations, I will trust His plans and follow Him faithfully even when I do not fully understand what He is doing.