THE KING COMES!

(Jesus Came to Destroy What is False)

August 23, 2020

Mark 11:1-18

Key Verse 11:9b “‘Hosanna!’ ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

We subtitled the message, “Jesus Came to Destroy What is False” because Jesus came to destroy false expectation and false religion. We are deceived by outward appearances. The social media make it much worse. Social media cause depression because some people cannot distinguish between what is real and what is not real. The gap between their imagined life and their real life is too big and they lose hope and it makes them depressed. We should demolish our fantasy world, and what is false in our hearts. We should overcome Satan’s deception. There is a song, “When You Wish Upon a Star” by Cliff Edwards.

When you wish upon a star

Anything your heart desires

Will come to you…

Fate is kind

She brings to those to love

The sweet fulfillment of

Their secret longing

It makes you feel good, but it is a lie. It is only a fantasy. It is not real. Likewise, people of Israel had fantasy about the earthly messianic kingdom, where the Messiah will come and solve all their problems. They created a false religious system in which they felt righteous. They made a magnificent temple where they sacrificed numerous animals. But it was a den of robbers. It was full of evil and hypocrisy. In today’s passage, Jesus entered Jerusalem to destroy false expectation and false religion. He came to break down Satan’s deception.

With this passage, we come to the final week of Jesus’ life on earth. The end of this week is the cross and the resurrection. The year is 30 A.D. The week begins with a very strange event. We call it the triumphal entry; but that is really not appropriate to capture what is going on. It was the false coronation of the true King. The true coronation of Christ has two parts: one has already happened, and the other has not. The first coronation of Christ occurred at his ascension, when he sat at the right hand of God. This was his first coronation and it was a heavenly coronation. He is reigning from the heavenly throne as the sovereign of heaven and the universe. But he has not yet had his earthly coronation. Jesus will return to earth, not riding on the colt of a donkey, but riding on a white horse, according to Revelation 19, coming out of heaven, followed by the armies of heaven, riding on white horses. When he arrives, he will destroy the ungodly in the final judgment; and then he will establish his throne in Jerusalem, and that is the earthly coronation of Christ. Today’s event is neither the heavenly coronation of Christ, nor is the earthly coronation of Christ. It is a mock coronation.

Look at verses 1b-2. “Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.’” Jesus’ mission and command to these two disciples seems awkward and even shocking to the disciples’ ears. Without even asking the owner’s permission, they are to go and take a donkey colt from a person they do not know. Jesus is Lord of all things and all creatures in the world. Psalm 24:1 says, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” The donkey colt tied at this person’s house was not owned by that person. It was not his, but the Lord’s. The donkey colt was created by Jesus for this very purpose in history. It was put there so that he would ride it into Jerusalem to fulfill the Scriptures. It was waiting for Jesus to use it. We call this the Lordship of Christ. This means that Jesus is the Lord of all things. Lord means the owner. Each one of us was created by God. The Lord Jesus owns our lives. This means that he wants to use our lives. He didn’t make us for nothing. He didn’t make us and then forgets about us because there are over 7 billion people in the world. Sometimes we think that our lives are ours. We also like to think that everything that we have is ours. One rock singer (Billy Joel) made a song titled, “This is my life.” Some of the lyrics he wrote are: “…This is my life. Go ahead with your own life, leave me alone.” When we try to control our lives and hold onto our material possessions for ourselves, then we become very fearful and anxious. But when we humbly acknowledge that our live are just borrowed, and when we let the Lord Jesus Christ use our lives, then we can have the peace of God with us.

Look at verses 7-8. “When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches that they had cut in the fields.” Why would they spread their coats on the road? It was an old, ancient gesture, a custom that showed submission. Kings were always elevated and people were under their feet. This was a way to symbolize that: “You can walk all over me; I am submissive to you.” This is an affirmation, at least superficially, “You are our King. You are our sovereign.” Their hope for the kingdom was really high; but they had their own idea: “Attack the Romans; throw out the Romans. Give us our place in the world, and fulfill all the promises of the Old Testament to us.” They were all superficial and earthly.

Look at verse 9. “Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’” They were shouting, “Hosanna!” Hosanna means, “Save now. Deliver us now.” They are talking about an earthly, political, military deliverance. They are shouting Psalm 118:26, a psalm of salvation, sometimes called “the conqueror’s psalm.” In 164 B.C., Israel was under the rule of Antiochus IV of Seleucid empire, who forbade the Jews from worshiping God. Maccabeus led a successful military campaign to drive out Antiochus’ army. Maccabeus entered Jerusalem in triumph and rededicated the temple. The Jews shouted this psalm at Maccabeus. The Jewish festival of Hanukah celebrates the rededication of the temple following Maccabeus’ victory. They expected Jesus to do the same. They said, “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest heaven.” They are shouting at the top of their voice. Luke adds that they even said, “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.” This is mob hysteria. They know that these things relate to the kingdom. The kingdom will be a kingdom of salvation. The kingdom will be a kingdom over which the son of David rules. The kingdom will be the kingdom promised to David with all those promises fulfilled. The kingdom will be a kingdom of peace and a kingdom of glory. Everything shouted is true, based on the Bible. Jesus is God’s King, but this is not God’s time to establish earthly messianic kingdom. Jesus did not drive out the Romans. Instead, he attacked the false religion by attacking the temple. When he didn’t do what they wanted, they began to turn on him. By the end of the week, they screamed, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Just a few days later they completely reversed their sentiments. Why? Because he didn’t do what they wanted him to do. Jesus did not fulfill their dream.

The dreams of that Palm Sunday were soon turned into the stark realities of the betrayal, the trial and the crucifixion. The reality of the situation was that Jesus was not the kind of hero they hoped he would be. Jesus was not the kind of king to lead an earthly army. Jesus would not deliver the Jews from the Romans. In a sense he shattered the dreams of the people that day. The crowds of Good Friday turned against Jesus for one reason because he didn’t fulfill the dreams they had of him the Sunday before. Jesus had them see the reality of who he was, not an earthly king, but a heavenly king. He was not a warrior who would come to destroy the Romans. But Jesus was a warrior who would come to destroy death. He shattered the dreams of the people. He gave them a taste of reality and for that the people turned against him. Jesus was painting a picture of a suffering Messiah. A Messiah who would suffer for the sins of all people. And the people shouted “crucify him” because they could not understand that he was to be the suffering Messiah. They shouted “crucify him” because Jesus did not fulfill their expectations. They shouted “crucify him” because they wanted a warrior king who would lead them into battle. But Jesus was the lamb who was to be sacrificed!

What about you? Are you holding out for your false expectations of what Jesus should do in your life, or are you willing to submit to him as King today? Are you willing to submit to God as King and Master and bow the knee, or are you requiring Jesus to bow the knee to your own false expectations for your life? The same God who is requiring your allegiance, loved you enough to die for you. You can trust this King to do beyond what you could ask or think. Will you trust him? Or are you holding on your fantasy? Are you being deceived by false expectations?

What did Jesus do first when he entered Jerusalem? He didn’t go to the palace to be enthroned as a king. He went to the temple and looked around at everything but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve. He didn’t like what he saw. He was developing the strategy for the next day when he goes in and clear the place. Look at verses 15-16. “On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.” The temple was supposed to be the place where people worshiped God. The temple was divided into 5 sections: the Most Holy Place and the Holy Place, and the Court of the Priest where they offer the sacrifice, the Court of the Israelites, the Court of the Women, and lastly Court of the Gentiles. This is where they set up shops. This is where the priests made money by conspiring with business people. It was a huge scam. If you brought a sacrifice from home, let’s say you brought a lamb without blemish from your own flock—a priest would inspect the animal. The priest would say that the animal is not good enough for sacrifice and you would be required to buy an animal from the vendors inside the temple at ten times the price. Then, you would have to pay the temple tax only in the temple currency. Pilgrims came from all kinds of nations when they came in for the Passover, and you would have to exchange your coins and the exchange fee was, according to one historian, at least 25 percent. If you were poor, you could give a dove as a sacrifice according to the provision of God’s law in Leviticus 12. They charged doves 10 times in the temple than outside. This is perversion, extortion. Noise, traffic, it was anything but a house of prayer. The Court of Gentiles was the place where the Gentiles could come and pray, but it was so noisy that they could not pray. Jesus went in and just ripped into all of this. He started driving out the people buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.

Look at verse 17. “And as he taught them, he said, ‘Is it not written: “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations”? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’” The temple had an appearance of worship, but it was a den of robbers. It gave people false sense of righteousness. The religious leaders were proud of the temple. They thought that all the sacrifices were pleasing to God. However, God was not pleased with their hypocrisy. Isaiah 1:11-15 says, “The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me…Stop bringing meaningless offerings...When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening.” The fig tree which has only leaves without any fruit symbolizes the temple. Jesus cursed the fig tree as a symbol of judgment on the temple. We will study more next week.

Look at verse 18a. “The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him.” Jesus deliberately provoked the religious leaders so that he would be crucified on Friday, the Passover. God’s timing is perfect. According to the Mosaic Law, a sacrificial lamb for the Passover was to be selected and set apart on the tenth of Nisan. The tenth was Monday, and that’s when the sacrificial lamb arrived. And the sacrificial lamb was to be sacrificed on the fourteenth, and that is Friday. So Jesus was selected as the Passover Lamb when he entered Jerusalem, and he was crucified on Friday as the Passover Lamb.

We are deceived by outward appearances. How often we fail to see the suffering Messiah, and instead get caught in the excitement with a vague hope that he will solve all our problems in an instant? How often are we deceived by the message, “Jesus will make you rich. Jesus will heal you. Jesus will give you all your dreams. Jesus will fulfill all your desires”? All the praise and the excitement will go on until Jesus doesn’t deliver the goods that the fallen sinner wants; and they’ll turn on him. Jesus came to demolish what is false, pretension of the world. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says, “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” The devil deceives us to think that things are far worse than they actually are. The devil makes us think that things are better than they actually are. Many Israelites thought that they were righteous when they made offerings in the temple but they were full of evil.

May God help us to have spiritual eyes to see the falsity and pretension of the world, and overcome the world through Jesus Christ. May Jesus enter our hearts and demolish all falsehood.

Big Idea: Jesus came to destroy what is false