

Slide #1 : T minus 8 days: The King has arrived...

INTRODUCTION

My wife Jeanine likes to watch the Space-x rocket launches from our front yard. So much so that she gets dejected when she misses one. A few months ago someone told me about the “Space Coast Launch Console” App; and now Jeanine has it and it helps her not miss a launch. It tells you days in advance when the next launch will take place and sends notifications so you don’t miss it.

Sometimes when we are out on the street, sometimes with our neighbors, we are all looking East waiting for the launch and maybe some other neighbors walk by. It is amazing to me that often they do not even look up to see what we are staring at in the sky! They just keep walking their dog and are either oblivious or completely jaded as to the marvel of watching something launched into space. Something momentous is occurring and they don’t care.

There is something in our passage this week that is truly momentous, and the people were told – “Behold,” “watch,” “look out.” Something incredible is happening – don’t miss it.

What we will see happening in Matthew this week is the greatest person ever to be on the planet is coming to the most momentous week of his life. The books of the New Testament called the “gospels” (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) spend a combined 29 of 89 chapters (1/3) on this final week of Jesus’ life on earth. And our passage today is “day one” of that, or as the title said, T minus 8 days to the resurrection!

OUR CONDITION

And in our passage, we see two basic things occurring: God's wanting to show us something (saying "Behold") and secondly our need to see it.

We need to "behold" Jesus as King; this is God's will and our need.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Matthew 21:1–17 (ESV)

¹Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,

²saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me.

³If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once."

⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

⁵"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.' "

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them.

⁷They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them.

⁸Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

⁹And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

¹⁰And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city **was stirred up**, saying, “Who is this?”

¹¹And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

¹²And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

¹³He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”

¹⁴And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.

¹⁵But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant,

¹⁶and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, “ ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise’?”

¹⁷And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

TWO PASSES

We are going to traverse this passage two times. We are going to look at two things from two points of view. We are going to see Jesus Christ as the king and his worship from both God’s perspective and from our perspective.

Slide #1

We need to be ones that “Behold:”

We need to “behold” that it is God’s will for Jesus to be recognized as king.

We need to “behold” that it is God’s will for Jesus to be worshipped.
We need to “behold” and recognize Christ as our king.
We need to “behold” and worship Christ as our king.

WHAT IS GOD’S WILL

What is God’s will? This is the central question of Christianity. We might think sometimes the most important thing is for a person to be saved; we talk about that all the time. We talk about a passage of scripture and say, “what does that mean to me?” “How does it meet my needs?” We even talked about that, last week when we talked about the Bible study method. We talked about how we should see the “thrust” of a passage then the “goal” of a passage and the “primary claim” of a passage and finally the “fallen condition focus.” This “fallen condition focus” defines the need within us, that God ministers to, through the passage of scripture, by his grace.

But that is not the most important thing in Christianity. The focus has to be on “what does God want, what is his will” not, our own needs.

We see this in the first commandments that God gave.

Exodus 19:16–17 (ESV)

¹⁶On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.

¹⁷Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain.

Exodus 20:1–6 (ESV)

¹And God spoke all these words, saying, ²“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

³“You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

What does God care about? His own glory. What God is about is that he is to be worshipped, and no other. That can sound horribly selfish, as if God has a “need” for masses to huddle around and worship him, but it is for a simple reason – that he is worthy and he is the only one that is worthy.

He is the only one that is self-existent; he is the only one that is eternal; he is the only one that is infinite in all his being; He is the only one that has all wisdom and all knowledge; he is the only one that is good; he is the only one that possesses all love.

He is worthy. To the worshipping heart, no explanation is needed. To the self-worshipping heart, no explanation can be given. We can either see the beauty or we do not.

And if we cannot, then we get to the second thing that is important is that we are fixed, so that we can do the first thing. This is often what we talk about: how God fixes us in Christ to be able to see and love and worship God.

Because of our fallen condition we have fallen into a deep pit. In this pit, the only thing that we can see is ourselves. We can glance up from that very deep pit and see a bit of the sky, but our view is very limited. This is why Jesus came; to pull us up from that pit to restore us to God and being able to love and worship him.

A man can love his wife, or a man can love how his wife makes him feel. That is not the same thing. We can love God, or we can love God's benefits to us. Again, that is not the same thing.

What do we need to care about? Giving glory to God!

TIME FOR SOMETHING NEW

In our passage today, we see that Jesus arrives at Jerusalem, and now it is time to fulfill more scripture. It is time for something new.

What we will see in these next chapters is "Jesus's final break with Judaism", according to James Boice, a bible scholar. And this make sense from the passage that will follow. Jesus is making a break and starting something new: Christianity.

Slide #3

We need to behold that it is God's will for Jesus to be recognized as king.

Jesus instructs the disciples to go into Jerusalem, and using his omniscience, tells them where two donkeys will be found, a mother and her colt, and to bring them to him. He says, ³*If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once."*

I suppose if no one was there, he would return and say, "Hey! Who stole my donkeys!"

Jesus knew it was time to fulfill prophecy. Matthew partially quotes from Zechariah 9,

⁵*"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"*

And we see in Zechariah 9:9 (ESV) some more details...

⁹Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! **Behold, your king is coming to you;** righteous and having salvation is he, **humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**

There is that word “behold!” Pay attention, look up, see what is happening, don’t be dull and self-absorbed.

Now many of the people that were following at this point were followers of Jesus. In ...

Matthew 20:29 (ESV)

²⁹And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him.

This was right before he healed the two blind men that we talked about last week. So, there was a crowd present and that knew Jesus and his miracles, but looked what happened, verse 7,

⁷*They brought the donkey and the colt and [the disciples] put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. ⁸Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.*

It seems as soon as the donkey appeared and the disciples began to put their cloaks on them, the whole crowd seemed to sense the portent of what was occurring. They were a part of fulfilling prophecy - and they knew it.

⁹*And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”*

Slide #4

We need to behold that it is God’s will for his son to be worshipped.

It was God's will to install his son as the king, and for him to be worshipped and honored.

These phrase Hosanna means, "save us now!" The phrases "save us" and "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" come from Psalm 118. The psalm pictures the Messiah, or deliverer, entering the gates of the city, and the people are quoting this psalm and it surely is on Jesus' mind too, because it was one of the psalms used during the Passover celebration and probably to be sung by the disciples and Jesus a few days hence at the last supper,

Psalm 118:19–26 (ESV)

¹⁹Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. ²⁰This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. ²¹I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. ²²**The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.** ²³This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. ²⁴This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. ²⁵**Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success!** ²⁶**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!** We bless you from the house of the LORD.

In those times when a king would travel to an area under his control, there would be a huge entourage and there was a great deal of pageantry, horn blowing, military troops, and such to announce his arrival.

But Jesus did not come into Jerusalem on a battle steed; but he came humbly on a colt of a donkey. And so, while Jesus was the King of the entire universe, he got a rather pitiful inauguration celebration.

In our own country, when it is inauguration day for a new President, about half the people are happy and half the people are sad. But there is great "pomp" (song) and playing of "Hail to the chief" (Song).

Often on the President's first day of office, the new President likes to make a show of undoing the previous president's executive orders and issuing ones of their own. And in a sense, we see Jesus doing that too. He entered the Temple and brought judgment and justice, by cleansing it of the evil that was occurring there.

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

Because there were perhaps a million pilgrims that came to Jerusalem every year for the Passover celebration, it presented a great opportunity to make money. When you are at a football game or the Daytona 500, there is probably no other occasion when you are willing to pay \$8 for a hotdog and \$4 for a coke.

Back in 1993, when Jeanine and Bradley were living in Russia it was the fourth of July and we and some friends were wanting to celebrate so we went up to a man in the street selling watermelons. He surely knew we were Americans and so we asked how much for the watermelon. He said \$30. He would not budge, **"so we said how about, no."** We did sing "God Bless America" and wave some sparklers around on the street corner, however!"

The pilgrims were required to pay as part of their worship a temple tax in the local Jewish currency. They had to convert their various currencies to the local Jewish currency, thus there was another opportunity to make money by giving a bad rate. Likewise, people needed to buy a pigeon for their sacrifice and prices could be fifty times greater in the temple court than outside.

Verse 12,

¹²And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold

pigeons. ¹³He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."

Jesus in his first act as king, his first executive order so to speak, was to bring justice and cleansing to his father's house.

Jesus also continued to care for his subjects by healing their infirmities,

¹⁴And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵But when the **chief priests and the scribes** saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "**Hosanna to the Son of David!**" they were indignant, ¹⁶and they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" [As if they expected Jesus to recognize it as blasphemy to call him the Messiah.]

And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, "'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise'?" [Quoting Psalm 8].

But we know this worship that Jesus received as the king was to be very short lived. Jesus reign on the earth as the new king lasted just 6 days; it ended when he died on that cross with a sign above his head – "King of the Jews." Even during his short reign when Jesus was supposed to be receiving praise, he had his detractors. The prophecy of the "rejected cornerstone" from Psalm 118 was also about to come true in this week too. Jesus is praised now, but soon, will be rejected and condemned to crucifixion.

WE NEED TO BEHOLD, AND RECOGNIZE CHRIST AS OUR KING

We have seen what God wanted for Jesus. It was God's will that his son be recognized as the King of Israel and Messiah and to be worshipped. Now we need to look at what God wants for us.

The people on that road seemed to have a spontaneous revelation that they were a part of history. They recognized that Jesus was their coming King and laid their cloaks and palm branches on the road and they praised him.

Slide #5

Likewise, for us **we are to “behold” and recognize Christ as our king.**

Colossians 3:1–4 (ESV)

¹If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

When our original parents sinned in the garden, as the Bible says, “on the day you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall surely die.” They did die to God spiritually, and to his purposes for them to rule and reign on the earth. They abdicated the throne.

Now in Christ, we are to set our minds on things above, not the things on the earth because we have died and we are raised with Christ.

(use your hands to illustrate this below)

The human race died to God and fell to where the earthly ways were all they had, now in Christ we have died to the earth and been raised once again to relationship with God. We are restored in Christ to know God, our original purpose.

But now, it says “¹If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”

Jesus is seated now at the “right hand of God” and is reigning as the Heavenly King! And we are to **“behold” and recognize Christ as our king.**

When we recognize Jesus as king, we recognize his power and his authority over all things.

Romans 15:12 (ESV)

¹²And again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope.”

We put our hope in Christ and his rule.

Colossians 3:15 (ESV)

¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

When we know Christ’s reign over all things, we are to let that ruling of Christ bring us peace. **Christ is over all things, recognize his rule and have peace. That is God’s will for you.**

WE NEED TO BEHOLD CHRIST AS KING AND WORSHIP AND OBEY

Slide #6

Another thing that is God’s will for us is that **we need to “behold” and worship Christ as our king.**

There are a few places in the book of Matthew where we see people worshipping Jesus, first the Magi, or wise men in his infancy,

Matthew 2:11 (ESV)

¹¹And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Then when Jesus helped Peter walk on the water with him, then calmed the seas.

Matthew 14:32–33 (ESV)

³²And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Then at the end of the book of Matthew when Mary and Mary went to the tomb and the angels told them that Jesus was raised,

Matthew 28:8–9 (ESV)

⁸So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” [Hi there!] **And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.**

The book of Luke ends this way,

Luke 24:50–53 (ESV)

⁵⁰And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵²**And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³and were continually in the temple blessing God.**

And that is the conclusion of worshipping Jesus – that we have joy.

CONCLUSION

We have seen in this passage two different perspectives. What God wants for Jesus his son, and what he wants for us, his other sons and daughters:

We need to “behold” that it is God’s will for Jesus to be recognized as king.
We need to “behold” that it is God’s will for Jesus to be worshipped.

We need to “behold” and recognize Christ as our king.
We need to “behold” and worship Christ as our king.

Jesus had a brief time on earth where he was the reigning king, though virtually no one knew about it. But it is a beautiful thing to see God's purpose in Christ, to glorify his son and to allow us to glorify him.

The result is that Christ is glorified and that we have great peace and joy, reveling in Christ.

Please pray with me.