

The Return of the King Revelation 6-19

Mankind's Messiah: The Rejection of the Real King & the Reception of the False King

Matthew 21 & Revelation 13

Today as we open to Matthew 21, we celebrate what is traditionally called Palm Sunday, marks the time when the Real King, Jesus the Christ, was rejected.

We commemorate the day when God sent Jesus into Jerusalem as the promised Messiah, and the Prince of Peace, who would govern the world perfectly. But Jesus was ultimately rejected, as King, by the people. Jesus wouldn't give them what they wanted, so they rejected Him. The summary of what happened the week of the Triumphal entry is:

The Rejection of the Real King

On a sober note, Christ's rejection goes on even to this day. When most people really hear the Gospel of repentance, forsaking sin, and walking in obedience to Christ as Ruler of their life, they say that is too hard, I want to cling to my sins more, than I want to have eternal life through Jesus. As we have seen in Matthew 6:24, Jesus said we can only have one King that we serve.

Christ's Triumphal entry into Jerusalem marks perhaps the His most public ministry. Because of the incredible number of pilgrims packed into the area around Jerusalem, this may have been one of the largest crowds ever to follow Christ. In John's account (12:19), some of the eyewitnesses among the Pharisees even said that "the world" had gone after Him.

Listen to that moment as we stand and read Matthew 21:5-11 (NKJV):

"Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.'" 6 So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. 8 And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' Hosanna in the highest!" 10 And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" 11 So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

Jesus Rode into Jerusalem as the Real King of All Mankind

This key event of entry into Jerusalem in triumph, which is called Palm Sunday, marks the presentation of Jesus Christ as the Promised One. As Jesus rode into Jerusalem just as Zechariah had said He would. Jesus is the Real King, the Messiah, the Promised One.

Jesus came that day as the only One who could bring real peace. But the crowds only wanted Him with their spoken Hosannas, if He would give them what they wanted. The nation wanted freedom from Rome, not deliverance from their sins and pride. So the crowd chanted Hosannas, but their hearts and wills were saying other things.

Most Bible scholars believe Christ was crucified in either AD 30 or 33; and on both of those years, the tenth of Nisan was the Monday of the week of Passover. So if Jesus arrived on Monday, He would have rode into town at the same time as the Passover pilgrims came to bring their Lambs to the Temple as Exodus 12:2-6 instructs.

If Jesus entered Jerusalem triumphally on Monday, He was received into the hearts of the Jewish people as a nation much as a family received the sacrificial lamb into the home. In so doing our Lord would have fulfilled the Passover symbolism even in that small detail, being received by His people on the tenth of Nisan. Continuing that perfect fulfillment, He was then crucified on Friday the fourteenth of Nisan, as the true Passover Lamb sacrificed for the sins of the world.¹

But, by the end of the week, when the crowds sensed no movement to overthrow Rome was in Christ's plans, the mood swiftly changed. His rejection culminating in crucifixion was the answer mankind gave. *The real King was rejected.*

That is the message for us this Palm Sunday. Today we remember that when God presented Christ as the Messiah, they rejected Jesus Christ as the true King.

Palm Sunday's Passing Allegiance

All the shouts, all the honor, all the praise lasted for a day, but hearts were not devoted, lives were not surrendered. Spoken allegiance but not chosen obedience, that is what is so easy for us as humans.

Even the disciples were puzzled. He came as King riding in triumph; but what was next. That is what dominated their minds. When was He bringing in the coming Kingdom

¹ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody Press.

promised so clearly in the Old Testament. Trace with me the events that are tied to Christ's Triumphal Entry. Look at each day's events narrated by Matthew:

Monday: Jesus rode into town at the head of a massive crowd. Their chanting of Hosanna could be heard widely (Matthew 21:1-11). Jesus goes into the Temple, looks around at the improper practices, and departs. He returns to stay in Bethany.

Tuesday: The next morning, on the way back into Jerusalem from Bethany Jesus curses the fig tree (Mark 11:14, 20). Jesus then arrives at the Temple and for the second time cleanses it, just as He did at the start of His ministry in John 2 (Matthew 21:12-17). Jesus threw out all the buyers and sellers who had filled the Temple with merchandising instead of worship.

Wednesday: The disciples notice the withered fig tree on the way in to the Temple (Matthew 21:20-23). Jesus spends an entire day teaching in the Temple. For that whole day the Temple hosted the Truth Himself, and for the first time in hundreds of years the truth was filling that place undiluted and unrestrained. This teaching of truth fills the verses of Matthew 21:23-23:39. It is amazing that the final public message of Christ's ministry is what we see in Matthew 23: a scathing indictment of the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. Then Jesus laments over His People and His city in v. 37-39.

Then Jesus heads out of Jerusalem to the East, walking up to the top of the Mt. Of Olives on His way back to the little village of Bethany where He was staying with His friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. On the Mt. of Olives still facing Jerusalem, before going down the back side, Jesus stops to discuss the Temple's grandeur laid out before their eyes (Matthew 24:1). So Jesus spends Wednesday as His last day of public ministry in Jerusalem.

Thursday is the Last Supper, **Friday** He is crucified and buried, **Sunday** He Rises. This morning, note with me that last public day of ministry. It is:

The Day the Real King Explains the Future

Jesus takes time to explain the future plans God has for the world. Jesus here teaches what we call Biblical Eschatology, or prophecy. What was the message Jesus taught His disciples there on that side of the Mt. of Olives? What message did He want to leave with them?

Jesus spends the last part of the Wednesday of Passion Week teaching the disciples, and by virtue of inspiration, us, about the False King who was coming and who would be received by the world.

The coming False King, or the Antichrist, is central to the long and final message Jesus

gave that afternoon. The same message we see here in Matthew 24, is also in Mark 13, Luke 21, and Revelation 6-19.

It is amazing that at the end of His teaching ministry, Jesus devoted so much time to giving His disciples a picture of history to come. To us 2,000 years later, it sounds quite familiar. Jesus told them what we know as the history of the past 20 centuries: the world would have wars, famines, troubles, and persecutions for the Jews and for believers. That's just what has happened.

The Long Hard Scope of Painful Human History

To the disciples waiting for Christ to march to power, take the Throne back, rout the Romans, and bring Israel into the Kingdom, it was troubling to hear Christ's world. For all the things Jesus spoke about to take place meant a long time was going to pass between His first coming and His second.

As the disciples listened to Christ's explanation of things to come for their city Jerusalem, and their people the Jews: they must have been stunned. Jesus described a long, tortuous history for Jerusalem and the Jews. Filled with wars, conquests, persecutions, and globally felt disasters.

Note it was ongoing. Not "a war" but wars. Not "a rumor" but rumors. Jesus painted the picture of a long time. Then in v. 8 He said this is only the beginning. Basically Jesus was a pessimist. He did not see things getting better and better. In other words Jesus was not a post-millennialist. Jesus did not tell us things were going to get better and better, rather He said worse and worse.

Jesus was a Pessimist About the Future

Jesus says that the world to come after His death, burial, and resurrection faced a barrage of false christs, false teachers, false messiahs, false prophets, interspersed with wars, rumors of wars, ethnic strife, and persecutions of God's people. That is history from Christ's perspective.

By the way, just what He said came true. The Temple was destroyed in AD 70 just as He said. History since AD 70 has been just what He said it would be. That is the introduction to Rev. 6-19. All the disasters mankind has ever faced roll on until the period when each type of disaster is magnified to the point everyone on earth feels the horror, not just a localized disaster as in the past.

History as taught by Jesus can be summarized as: the period between His first and second coming will be nothing but relentless troubles, that will eventually reach the point of never before seen disasters globally. Plus a background of religious deception that will also get more and more powerful until all but the elect are deceived. Note that theme repeated four times: v. 4, 5, 11, 24.

Jesus Gives the Only True Map of the Future

The lesson Jesus gave them and us is that when you are trying to understand the plan of God for the future, don't listen to people that misrepresent God's Word and try to deceive people into things God has not said. Whether it is the occultic induced words of the 16th Century mystic Nostradamus, or the misguided predictions of the 21st Century Harold Camping. Avoid anyone who twists, distorts, or goes against the clear plan of God written down in His Word.

Jesus said also especially beware of those who claim to be Christ. There have been many false christs over the centuries. Even in modern times from Sung Myung Moon who founded the Moonies, to David Koresh of the 1993 Branch Davidians: we have many who claim to be Messiah or the Christ.

For a moment look at v. 24 and let me explain what many of us haven't really thought about: the connection of Islam with the events of the Tribulation. Jesus said there will always be false prophets, and we clearly think of Hinduism as false, and Buddhism as false. But in recent times, so called Christian voices are saying that Islam is actually not false because they believe in the same God as we do, and even believe in Jesus.

Beware of False Christs

Many believers aren't aware of how much Islam does teach about Jesus. The growing idea among some branches of Christianity today is that the way to save the world is to get all religions together, starting with Muslims because they already believe in Jesus. One well know professor from the Christian Left named Tony Campolo even wrote:

“When we listen to the Muslim mystics as they talk about Jesus and their love for Jesus, I must say it's a lot closer to New Testament Christianity than a lot of Christians.”

With Campolo so popular in the new online community of undiscerning, un-grounded, so called evangelicals, we need to ask, “Is the Muslim Jesus the same as the Biblical Jesus?”

The best way to know is to look at Islamic Eschatology. Yes, Islam has quite a well defined doctrine about the future which amazingly includes a return to earth of Jesus.

The False Teachings of Islamic Theology

If I could give you a synopsis of Islamic Theology as it related to the end times it would be made up of two parts: The Quran (the 114 chapters or Sura of the Divine words of Allah to Muhammad) and the Sunnah (the practice of Muhammad made up of the Hadith: his sayings & the Sira: his biography). Much like Roman Catholicism is the Bible plus tradition, and Judaism is the Old Testament plus Rabbinic tradition, so Islam has its primary book plus traditions.

In Islamic Theology Jesus is a man, not God. Jesus did not die, rather He was taken to Heaven like Elijah. That alone makes Islamic Theology dangerously false. If Christ didn't die, He didn't have to rise, so He couldn't have offered the substitutionary sacrifice for the sin of the world. Jesus is a man, and a prophet. Right now in Islamic Theology Jesus is at the right hand of Allah awaiting a return to earth when He is sent at Allah's command.

If you wondered why of all the prophets of Islam, would Jesus be sent back? That is a great question. In Islamic Theology Jesus returns to explain to misguided Christians that He is not God's Son, He did not die and rise again. Then Jesus lives on earth and dies, and is buried.

When a person says they believe in Jesus we must find out what Jesus they believe in. The Islamic Jesus is not the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, and second person of the Divine Trinity.

The Coming of the False Christ

Back to why we are here today. We are listening to Jesus teaching after the Triumphal Entry, and after His rejection: about the False King that the whole Earth accepts. That is Matthew 24:15. The Abomination that causes Desolation is also known to us as the Antichrist.

Turn with me to Revelation 13 where we meet this superman. A summary of Revelation 13 would be along these lines:

As the end of the world approaches, so does earth's darkest hour. Hell will soon open, and the pit will vomit out its demon hordes to run wildly throughout humanity. Other beasts from the abyss will globally wreak death and destruction.

Satan himself will invade the earth and seemingly conquer it at last.

At the helm, the visible leader of the world will be the long promised man of sin, the lawless one, the beast, the coming world leader—commonly known as the Antichrist. But behind him, the real power will be the god of this world, the dragon, old Lucifer, the lying serpent of Eden.

Imagine what it would be like if that perfect leader were to step forward tomorrow—a man who appears to seemingly come out of nowhere—almost a person from the past who rolls into one all the great leaders of the world. Imagine one man with the strength of a Caesar, the military genius of an Alexander, the mesmerizing oratory of a Hitler, the warmth of a Bill Clinton, the ruthless determination of a Ghenghis Khan, and all the apparent compassion and tenderness of Jesus Christ Himself!

Revelation 13 explains (as do other scriptures) what I consider to be one of the saddest doctrines in the Bible—the teaching about the Antichrist, which tells us that the FALSE Christ will be universally embraced by the world after the TRUE Christ has been rejected!

The Amazing Distortion of God's Truth

Now let me give you a summary of Islamic Eschatology's three great signs. The first sign is a man who comes as the end of human history. We have heard much more about him since the President of Iran started praying at the UN for the coming of the world leader that will bring peace at last to all of humanity. His name is Imam Al-Mahdi. Listen to the prayer given last September in NYC at the UN:

“God Almighty has promised us a man of kindness, a man who loves people and loves absolute justice, a man who is a perfect human being and is named Imam Al-Mahdi, a man who will come in the company of Jesus Christ, peace be upon Him, and the righteous,” he said. Calling the Mahdi “the Ultimate Savior,” Ahmadinejad said his arrival on earth “will mark a new beginning, a rebirth and a resurrection. It will be the beginning of peace, lasting security and genuine life.”²

The Mahdi, or the Twelfth Imam, that means the guided one, is the long-awaited savior. He is the establisher of the final Caliphate.

Their holy writings say this, the Mahdi will come *riding on a white horse*, and it even says in their writings, “As it says in Revelation 6:1 and 2. Saddam Hussein, by

² <http://flashtrafficblog.wordpress.com/2012/09/26/exclusive-ahmadinejad-gives-most-detailed-explanation-of-twelfth-imam-to-date-says-mahdi-will-soon-reign-over-whole-world/>

the way, painted murals of this Mahdi on a white horse all over Baghdad. And he comes carrying a sword to kill the infidels.

When the Mahdi arrives, **he will discover hidden scriptures**, he will discover them, interestingly enough, somewhere near the Sea of Galilee and there will be there hidden scriptures, hidden gospels and a hidden Torah and they will be the true scriptures which will be used by the Mahdi to show the Jews and the Christians they were wrong, that their scriptures were the false scriptures.

The Summary of the Muslim Mahdi is Just Like Rev. 13

Let me summarize. The Mahdi will be a messianic figure. He will be a descendant of Mohammed. He will be an unparalleled, unequaled leader. He will come out of a crisis of turmoil. He will take control of the world. He will establish a new world order. He will destroy all who resist him. He will invade many nations. He will make a seven-year peace treaty with the Jews. He will conquer Israel and massacre the Jews. He will establish Islamic world headquarters at Jerusalem. He will rule for seven years, establish Islam as the only religion. He will come on a white horse with supernatural power. He will be loved by all people on earth.

If that sounds familiar, that is a precise description of the biblical Antichrist, absolutely step-by-step-by-step-by-step. The Bible's Antichrist is their Mahdi. We know that the rider on the white horse in Revelation 6 is the Antichrist. They use that verse to describe their Mahdi.

Why am I giving you all this? Because the description of the Mahdi is exactly the description of the biblical Antichrist, the beast of Revelation 13, and you go into any kind of a study of that and you will find that all the details match up perfectly. The Bible's Antichrist is Islam's Savior and world conqueror who establishes a universal Islamic kingdom³.

Palm Sunday commemorates the day the Real King rode into Jerusalem and was rejected.

Jesus Christ taught extensively on the coming False King, that would be embraced by the World; and said Beware, don't be deceived.

Listen to His Word and you will be secure. "My sheep hear my voice". The message for each of us this Palm Sunday is, be sure you follow the Real King: Jesus Christ God's Son

³ 366 words; Quoted from a transcript of the sermon, "The Grim Reality of the Last Days", Mark 13:1-13, preached by John MacArthur, March 20, 2011, Word of Grace code 41-66.

who died for your sins, was buried, and rose again.