

GRACEPOINT CHURCH

Weekly Devotional

Once upon a Kingdom: The Stories Jesus Told Lent 5

Who is this Man? – Ian France –29.3.2026

Scripture

Matthew 21:1-11

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

Observation

Jesus knew what was waiting for Him in Jerusalem. He knew that the religious leaders were just waiting for a chance to arrest Him and deliver Him to the Romans for crucifixion. Yet in a memorable display of courage He entered the city, surrounded by crowds of people shouting His praise. It was not a quiet entry. He chose a young, unbroken animal to ride on through the crowds. A colt was often ridden by royalty in processions. The animal remained calm in the presence of its mother – and its Creator. Jesus did not need to ride, but He did so to fulfil the Messianic prophecy given by Zechariah (9:9), on the exact day Daniel foretold this event would happen (Daniel 9:24-27).

On this day Jesus entered Jerusalem as the Prince of Peace. The people cut palm branches as a symbol of victory and success, honouring Jesus as they would a triumphant leader; and they spread their cloaks on the road in front of Him, as they would for someone they acknowledged as worthy of their loyalty and support. (2 Kings 9:13). The crowd openly acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah as they shouted out their praise – Hosanna; Son of David; He who comes in the name of the Lord. For once, Jesus accepted their praise and acknowledgement of Him as Messiah. The whole city was stirred up by this triumphal entry and those who had not heard of Him asked who He was. But the crowds who greeted Him recognised Him as Jesus of Nazareth, even though it seemed strange to many that a prophet of any significance would come from that town.

The importance of the date:

According to John's Gospel Jesus went to Bethany six days before the Passover (John 12:1) The timing is significant. Three thousand five hundred years before, God had given Moses

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instructions about the Passover which falls in March/April in the Gregorian calendar that we follow. A Hebrew day begins at dusk and so it was on Nisan 15 that the Hebrews left Egypt. Six days earlier would have been Nisan 9. The next day, John tells us, (John 12:12) Jesus entered Jerusalem. On Nisan 10 the Jews would take lambs without blemish into their homes. Jesus, the Lamb of God, entered Jerusalem 1500 years after the first Passover in Egypt to the day. Whilst the crowd acknowledged Jesus (briefly) as the Messiah, they failed to see the significance of His role as the final, perfect Passover Lamb who would be sacrificed for their sin. A few days later, on Nisan 14, 250 000 sacrificial lambs were slaughtered in the temple courts at the exact time Jesus, the perfect sacrificial Lamb, died on the cross on Calvary.

Daniel also prophesied the exact time the Messiah would come (9:24-25). A week in these prophecies was calculated to be a period of seven years. It has been calculated that Daniel's prophecy covered a period of 483 years counting from the time King Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah the command to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem on March 14, 445 BC. Taking into account the difference between the Jewish calendar and our Gregorian calendar, the 69 weeks is the equivalent of 173 880 days. The calculations also took into account there was no year 0 between 1 BC and 1 AD and 116 days were added to account for leap years. The resulting date was 6 April 32 AD or Nisan 10 according to the Jewish calendar.

Icebreaker:

What is the most important date in your year? Why do you choose this one?

Application

- Why do you think Jesus entered Jerusalem in such a public way that stirred up the city, only to retire again to Bethany for the night?
- *Jesus entered the city as our King:* Is Jesus your King? What does that mean to you?
- *Jesus is a humble King:* How do world leaders influence the way you live? Are there any you admire? Why/why not? How does the fact that Jesus is our Servant King impact your life?
- *Jesus comes to cleanse us and make us fit for purpose:* What is the greatest change in the way you live your life when you look back over the last year or so? How has Jesus changed you? How do you feel about becoming increasingly like the person God envisages you to be? What do you think is God's vision for your life? Are you aware of anything that God is asking you to change?

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- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

Spend some time declaring God's glory, then pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

Service

How can you serve others by following Jesus example as you walk the road to the cross this Easter?

Bibliography

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