

NOON BIBLE STUDY: MATTHEW 21 (PART 1)

Messiah/Christ - Literally means “*anointed one*.” In Israel, anointing with oil set apart kings, priests, and sometimes prophets for their God-given role. Over time, “*the Messiah*” (Hebrew) or “*the Christ*” (Greek) came to mean not just any anointed leader, but *the promised king* who would rule forever, fulfilling God’s covenant with David.

Son of David - (2 Samuel 7:12-16) - A title pointing to God’s promise that David’s dynasty would endure forever. Many kings descended from David, but “the Son of David” became shorthand for the long-awaited heir who would restore God’s people and reign in justice.

Son of God - (1 Chronicles 17:11-14) - In God’s covenant promise to David, he said that the descendant who would rule forever would not only be David’s son, but also God’s son. This term “son of God” isn’t merely a title describing biological details, but calls back to this important promise to David.

Son of Man - (Daniel 7:13-14) - this is a figure who comes on the clouds, receives authority, glory, and a kingdom from God (the Ancient of Days), and whose dominion never ends.

Matthew 21:1-11

1 Kings 1:1-4 - David is old, Attended to by nurse

1 Kings 1:5-10 - Adonijah’s Attempt At Taking The Throne

David had many sons. Although Adonijah is not a “well known” son of David (like Solomon or Absalom), it makes some sense that he would attempt to be David’s successor. The ESV Study Bible tells us the following:

“**Adonijah** was the fourth of David’s sons born in Hebron (2 Sam. 3:2–5), and the eldest surviving. The first, Amnon, and third, Absalom, have died by this point in the story (2 Samuel 13–18), and the second, Chileab, is presumably also dead (unmentioned after 2 Samuel 3).”

Some of David’s advisors and officials sided with Adonijah, but notably, not some of the more spiritually keen advisors (v. 7-8).

1 Kings 1:11-14 - Nathan Informs And Instructs Bathsheba

We learn here for the first time in Scripture that Solomon was the *divine* choice for successor. It is possible that this was not widely known in Israel, nor in David’s immediate family - but Nathan tells us that it was known by David, Bathsheba, and the LORD. We can see the confirmation of this from **1 Chronicles 22:7-11**

1 Chronicles 22:7-11 - David said to Solomon, "My son, I had intended to build a house to the name of the LORD my God. 8 "But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to My name, because you have shed so much blood on the earth before Me. 9 'Behold, a son will be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days (*the name Solomon comes from the Hebrew word for "peace"*). 10 'He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.' 11 "Now, my son, the LORD be with you that you may be successful, and build the house of the LORD your God just as He has spoken concerning you...

Apparently this prophecy was given (probably by Nathan?) around the time David first inquired to build a house/temple for the LORD (2 Samuel 7). Thus, Adonijah's actions were not of the LORD, nor were they in line with David's own wishes.

1 Kings 1:15-21 (22-27) - Bathsheba informs David of Adonijah's actions, Nathan supports her

Bathsheba reminds David of his own promise to her (and to the LORD) concerning Solomon. Remember, all of the other children of David were invited, but not Solomon. (1:9-10). The fact that everyone else is there, save Bathsheba and Solomon would have led to real concerns for their safety if Adonijah's act is looked at as legitimate by the nation.

The presence of the royal family, the leading general, and Abiathar the priest would have given tremendous legitimacy to Adonijah. We cannot underestimate this. While he is a small footnote in the overall narrative of David and Solomon, this moment in real time must have been incredible. David's successor, his own son, is proclaimed king, with all of his brothers and sisters, except one (political leaders), the leader of the Army of Israel (military leaders), and one of the leading priests (religious leaders) all making sacrifices, with the lame-duck king in hospice care. Meanwhile Solomon, the rightful successor, needs his mommy to advocate for him. This would have been quite the compelling moment for Adonijah's campaign to succeed David.

v. 20 - "the eyes of Israel are on you" - David may be in his final days, but he is still king, and still beloved by the nation. Bathsheba makes her appeal for Solomon with this in mind.

1 Kings 1:28-31 - David confirms Solomon as his successor and calls for his immediate anointing and proclamation

1 Kings 1:36-40 - Solomon Anointed King

Solomon is to be anointed as king by the priests and prophets. This was the way the LORD would have his kings identified. It was not by them amassing great wealth, military strength or even the popular favor of the people. But it was by the divinely appointed anointing by the priest and/or prophet of the LORD.

This is an unusual event. Typically a new king takes the throne of their father upon their Father's death. But because of the controversy, Solomon is anointed king while David is still alive.

(1 Kings 1:41-49 - Adonijah and his dinner guests hear of Solomon's anointing)

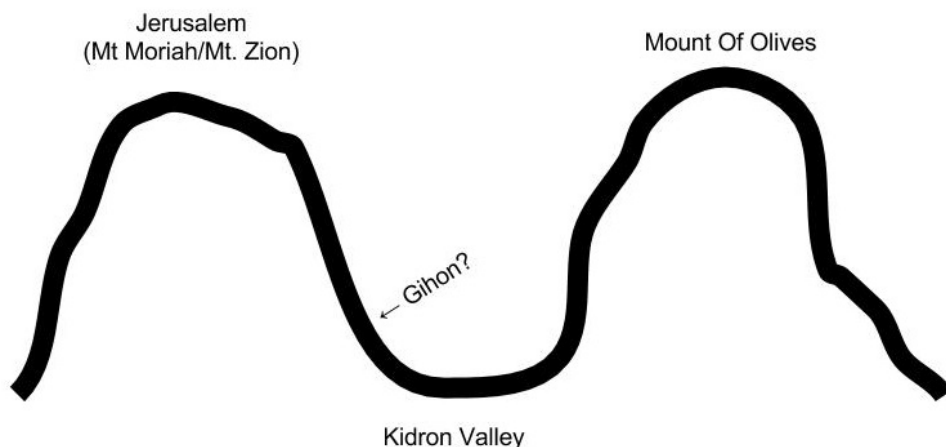
Later, just before David dies, he calls all of Israel together again and confers to Solomon the Davidic Covenant (**1 Chronicles 28:1-8**)

The reign of Solomon begins a time in Israel that is unparalleled in their history. There will be peace, prosperity, abundance, and the exclusive worship of Yahweh, the true God.

Where This Happened - Gihon

1 Kings 1:33 - The king said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have my son Solomon ride on my own mule, and bring him down to **Gihon**."

Most scholars and historians recognize Gihon as the location of a critical spring to the residents of Jerusalem. It was outside of the main part of the city of David, perhaps on the mountainside or in the Kidron Valley. Consider the following to help us locate Gihon:



The wording used in 1 Kings 1:33 to identify Gihon is “bring him down to Gihon”. This implies the location is lower or away from David's royal residence in Jerusalem.

Jewish historian Josephus mentions that Gihon is “outside the city” ("Antiquities." Book 7, Chapter 14, Section 5, Verse 355).

2 Chronicles 33:14 mentions that during some of King Manasseh's construction projects the outer wall of the city of David was built “on the west side of Gihon, in the valley (the south-eastern side of Jerusalem), even to the entrance of the Fish Gate (the north-western side).” This puts Gihon just below the “City of David” portion of Jerusalem, outside of the city proper towards the Kidron Valley/Mount of Olive's side.

“The Gihon Spring, the only source of water of the city, emerges in the Kidron Valley, east of the City of David...The spring emerged in a cave on the eastern slope of the City of David above the Kidron Valley, and from there water flowed into the valley, watering the terraced, agricultural plots on the slope of the City of David.”¹

¹ <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Archaeology/jerwater.html>

Mode of Transportation - Donkey

Both Solomon and Jesus ride in on a mule/donkey! (The LXX uses a similar word to the NT word translated donkey.

For a king to be able to ride into his city on a donkey indicates he is coming in peace during a time of peace. He is approachable by his people and not a cruel ruler. The contrast would be a great horse (or elephant in some regions) which would symbolize a military ruler coming to conquer or to assure his people of his strength during a time of war.

Cries Of The Crowd - Hosanna To The Son of David!

We know Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, but let's observe what the crowd's said:

Matthew 21:9 - The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, "**Hosanna to the Son of David**; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!"

Mark 11:9-10 - Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; 10 **Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David**; Hosanna in the highest!"

Luke 19:38 - shouting: "BLESSED IS **THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

John 12:13 - (a large crowd) took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, **even the King of Israel**."

The crowds don't miss this moment. They know exactly what Jesus is claiming in this act. If you are entering Jerusalem on a donkey, you're identifying yourself with king Solomon, the first son of David to sit upon David's throne. It is a demonstrative Messianic act.

I slightly labor on all of this to set the scene for this event. Here is what we have just witnessed:

Solomon, the son of David, the next king of Israel is riding on a donkey into the city of Jerusalem with crowds growing while choruses of "*Long Live The King*" are being sung. He is being proclaimed the rightful heir of the kingdom, while an imposter attempts to sit on the throne.

How can we not immediately think of the near identical scene that plays out centuries later in the same place. Of course our minds turn to Jesus' "triumphal entry" on "Palm Sunday"(Mt. 21).

We know that Solomon was anointed and proclaimed king "Gihon", an important spring outside of Jerusalem. It was located on the side of the mountain or at the base of the mountain

Jerusalem is located on (Mount Moriah/Zion). Traditionally, Jesus' entry to Jerusalem has been pictured with Jesus entering the city proper and the crowds gathering as he rides on a donkey through the city streets.

But what does the Biblical text actually say?

- Jesus is on Mount of Olives when he requests the donkey (Matthew 21:1-2)
- His disciples *bring* the donkey to him (21:2)
- The crowds go ahead of him and behind him (21:9)
- *Then* he "entered Jerusalem" (21:10)

Luke 19:37-38 (ESV) - As he was drawing near - already on the way down the Mount of Olives- the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, 38 saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

John 12:12-13 - "Large crowd that was in Jerusalem for Passover heard Jesus was coming (v. 12) "went out to meet him..." (v. 13)

This is remarkable! This all happened not *inside* the city walls, but just *outside* the city, as Jesus approached Jerusalem on his way down from the Mount of Olives. Amazingly, this is also close to where Gihon is. It is possible that Jesus is at or near the exact location of Solomon's anointing and coronation! And why not?! This entire record is a mirror of Solomon's proclamation as King.

Clearly Jesus knew what he was doing as he rode into the city on a donkey that momentous day. He is claiming that place that was once reserved for Solomon. He certainly isn't haphazardly riding in on whatever he can find or randomly approaching some unknown town or place.

Think of iconic moments or places in American history - imagine someone wearing a white wig as they cross the Delaware River, or start a speech from the Lincoln Memorial with the words "I have a dream" - there would be intentionality to these decisions to tie the person or event to something everyone knows is a big deal in the history of the nation. Critics would ask "who does that person think they are? George Washington, Martin Luther King Jr?!" - and so in this moment the crowds rejoice as the son of David is coming into God's chosen city.

Prophetic Fulfillment

Lastly, this moment was prophesied about generations after Solomon and generations before Jesus. The prophet Zechariah called upon the people of God to keep their eyes open for the following:

Zechariah 9:9 - Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Matthew tells us that this is fulfilled as Jesus rides into Jerusalem that day (Matthew 21:9)

This act of Jesus is more than just a casual Sunday donkey ride. Jesus was intentional in this act. He is, in his most dramatic and public act, claiming to be the Messiah, the King, son of David. A new Solomon who will bring salvation. Jesus knew exactly what he was doing and the crowds understood it.

He is riding in on a donkey, being proclaimed as king, while another king, the Roman Caesar and ultimately Satan, the ruler of this age, are claiming the throne. He rides in, with the people shouting “long live the king.”

When Solomon rode in as king, his enemy fled away and he took his rightful throne. When Jesus rode in as king, he was coming to conquer the enemy - sin and death - so that he could take his rightful throne - an eternal one. For only days later, the same crowds that shouted “Hosanna” would be yelling “crucify him”.

Before Jesus could take over the world and rule on David’s throne forever - the world’s sin problem needed to be addressed. For without the sacrificial payment of Jesus’ death on the cross, no one would be able to join in the eternal element of the kingdom of God. Before he comes to take the throne, he came and took his cross.

And so while the crowds of that day did not understand all that would happen, looking back we can see that for Jesus to fulfill all that the Messiah was prophesied to accomplish, he would first come as a servant and die for the sins of the world and then return again as king and rule on David’s throne forever.

There are surely devotional takeaways from this record - but for today I want to conclude in awe of God by being in awe of God’s book - the Bible. All of this exciting information isn’t only found by going to seminary or reading a high level commentary series. This information was discovered right in this building, as we read through 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings in 2016! We read line by line, verse by verse, chapter by chapter and God taught us these amazing stories which had meaning back then to Israel but also serve as the foundation to understand the greatest part of this story - that which concerns the life and teaching of Jesus.

And so as we move forward into Matthew 21, we don’t just see an interesting story about Jesus riding into Jerusalem - we see the climax of centuries of God’s promises, woven together through history, prophecy, and fulfillment. The same God who orchestrated Solomon’s anointing and enthronement is the God who sent His Son to claim His throne. That should not only deepen our confidence in Scripture, but also stir our hearts to worship the God who is faithful and the king who comes to us in humility, and who will one day come again in glory.