

April 5, 2020
Servant King



Adult
Resource Sheet 1

Focus on Matthew 21:1–11; 26:14–27:66

WHAT is important to know?

—From “Exegetical Perspective” by Audrey West

By the time Jesus and his entourage enter Jerusalem, the whole city is “in turmoil” (*seiō*, tremble). The verb and its cognate noun refer to the earthquakes at Jesus’ final breath upon the cross (27:51; cf. 27:54) and at the appearance of the angel at the empty tomb (28:2). The shaking of the earth is associated with the “day of the LORD” (Joel 2:10–11) and with the presence of God (Ps. 68:8; cf. Job 9:6). Although the people of Jerusalem do not fully comprehend the significance of Jesus’ arrival, their reaction to him is fitting; when the Messiah comes, it is an earthshaking event.

WHERE is God in these words?

—From “Theological Perspective” by James O. Duke

The Jesus who enters Jerusalem *was* and always *is* a challenge to this world’s powers and principalities—not merely a spiritual challenge but a political challenge as well. His cause is not the same as that of the Zealots or any violent insurrectionists, that of some aspiring political party, or that of a legislative or executive agenda. Nevertheless, this “king Jesus” is a threat, both to the power elite and the fickle multitude. Jesus did not come “in triumph,” was not crucified and raised, and communities of believers in him did not emerge, in order to leave the ways of the world as they were.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

—From “Pastoral Perspective” by Veronica Miles

When asked “Who is this?” they replied, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee” (21:11). This disturbed the religious leaders, as verse 46 reveals, but Matthew does not tell us why. Perhaps the fervor of the moment forecast a time when common folk standing on the side of justice would become a recurrent theme in the world. Maybe they were concerned that people would begin to sense their own deep yearning for a just and life-affirming existence. Perhaps the image of Jesus as prophet invites us to embody peace and reconciliation as an ongoing practice and stand boldly with “the one who comes in the name of the Lord” (v. 9).

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

—From “Homiletical Perspective” by

John Rollefson

Today our singing can best be understood in the context of the Jewish Passover liturgy, which reminds its participants: “It was not only our fathers whom the Holy One, Blessed is He, redeemed from slavery; we, too, were redeemed from slavery; . . . Therefore it is our duty to thank, praise, pay tribute, glorify, exalt, honor, bless, extol and acclaim Him Who performed all these miracles for our fathers and for us.” Our Holy Week liturgies are rooted in this strong Jewish sense of the present faith community’s being remembered ritually into God’s ongoing, liberating action. We mark how the empire of God, whose nearness Jesus came to proclaim and embody, looks to welcome quite “a different kind of king” indeed.