

Lay Preachers' Bulletin

Lectionary Notes – March 2026

March's lectionary notes have been provided by The Rev. Br. Jason Carroll, Diocesan Ministry Developer and Chair of the Calgary School of Discipleship.

March 1 - Lent 2

Propers - BAS page 288

Gospel: [John 3:1-17](#) - Jesus Meets with Nicodemus

BACKGROUND:

While the Gospel of John is rich with symbolism and metaphor (light/dark; above/below; life/death; truth/blindness; flesh/Spirit etc.) the guiding principle of the Gospel is *New Creation*. That is, Jesus, who is the Word of Creation has come among us in the Incarnation in order to bring about a new creation, but now through death and resurrection, and the return of the Spirit. Scholars have located this idea in the Prologue (John 1:1-14) which describes the Word becoming flesh among us, which is then fulfilled in the *signs* of Jesus ministry and then in the *glory* witnessed in Jesus's death and resurrection. The story of Nicodemus's nighttime rendezvous with Jesus, immediately following the new creation sign at the Wedding of Cana, represents Jesus explaining to an "expert" of the Law how He will bring about this New Creation.

TEXT:

Broadly speaking, in this passage Jesus tells Nicodemus how he will bring about the New Creation, and you can break it into three parts.

1. John 3:1-8: Jesus explains the New Creation is found in the fulfillment of [Ezekiel 36:24-28](#) & [Ezekiel 37:9-14](#), where the people will be made new by cleansing with water and the gift of the Holy Spirit, a "new birth".

- Begin by reading Ezekiel 36: 24-28 & Ezekiel 37:9-14, and note how the restoration of God's people comes from 1) cleansing from sin with water (36:25), followed by 2) the return of the Holy Spirit who will give them a heart of "flesh" (36:26-27, 37:9-10, 14).
 - Note the contrast between Nicodemus coming at night, and Jesus telling him that to "see" the Kingdom of God you must be "born again/from above". (Scholars have long noted the dual meaning of the word again/above)
 - Jesus's response to Nicodemus's confusion that being "born again" is purely physical, that his words actually mean that it is from the Holy Spirit which is "from above".
 - V. 5-8 – Note the contrast between flesh and Spirit. Being "born from water and the Spirit", then, means that rebirth begins with the cleansing of water and is fulfilled in the mysterious animation in the Spirit which Ezekiel prophesied and witnessed in his visions.
2. John 3: 9-14: When Nicodemus admits his confusion, Jesus then tells him that this New Creation is begins with the Cross, where the Son of Man will be "lifted up" to restore the people from their sins, just as Moses lifted the serpent in the wilderness. ([Numbers 21:4-9](#))
- Begin by reading Numbers 21: 4-9, where the Israelites in their wilderness journey have rebelled once again against God, and have been punished by being bitten by poisonous serpents. In order to be "saved" from this punishment, God tells Moses to make a serpent on a pole, and any who look on it will be healed.
 - The obvious connection which Jesus makes is that in the same way that Israel was healed from the poison by looking at the serpent on the pole which had been "lifted up" for all to see, so too Jesus will be "lifted up" and any who look on him (i.e. believe in him) will be saved from the poison of sin and death.
3. John 3:16-21: Jesus (possibly John, some commentators argue that it is John "explaining" or "commenting" on Jesus's words to Nicodemus) explains that this way of New Creation is rooted in God's love and his desire to bring eternal life, not condemnation. Jesus is actually the

Light of the World which will expose darkness and force a choice between himself and the World. If you choose Jesus, you will not be condemned, if you choose the World, you are already condemned.

- V. 16 – Jesus explains that God’s love (i.e. *hesed* covenant love) extends to the whole world and offers eternal life to any who believe in Him. Note that “salvation” here is equated with the gift of eternal life, not simply eluding the consequences of sin.
- V. 17 – Jesus also explains that God’s goal was to avoid condemnation of the world, and to save it. This is the one and only time Jesus speaks of saving the world in the Gospel of John, all other instances the world is firmly aligned with Satan and faces judgement. Here is a “prophetic” voice which offers reconciliation and forgiveness in the hopes of avoiding condemnation and judgement.

REFLECTION:

1. What does it mean to be “born from above/again?”
2. What does it mean to be “born of water and Spirit?”
3. Take some time to reflect on how God’s love has lead to this solution to sin?

March 8 - Lent 3

Propers - BAS page 289

Gospel: [John 4:5-42](#) - Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

BACKGROUND:

While the Gospel of John is rich with symbolism and metaphor (light/dark; above/below; life/death; truth/blindness; flesh/Spirit etc.) the guiding principle of the Gospel is *New Creation*. That is, Jesus, who is the Word of Creation has come among us in the Incarnation in order to bring about a new creation, but now through death and resurrection, and the return of the Spirit. Scholars have located this idea in the Prologue ([John 1:1-14](#)) which describes the Word becoming flesh among us, which is then fulfilled in the *signs* of Jesus ministry and then in the *glory* witnessed in Jesus's death and resurrection. The story of Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman is a similar call that she understand Jesus's work of New Creation in her life.

A historical note is helpful here too.

- The fact that Jesus is travelling through *Samaria* and speaking to a *Samaritan* woman is central to the story. During the Exile when Israel's peoples were sent off to Assyria and Babylon, those powers also sent *their* citizens to colonize Israel as a way to ensure control. When some Jews returned from the Exile and settled back in Israel, they intermarried with those Assyrians who decided to stay. The result was a kind of mixed Jewish culture that existed in *Samaria*, the central area between Galilee in the North and Judea in the South. Most importantly, Jews considered the Samaritans as false, impure and unclean since they had intermingled with Gentiles.
- And the Samaritans, in defending themselves, had established a secondary *cultus* in the city of Shechem (possibly even a replica of the Temple in Jerusalem!), where Abraham set up an altar to God after arriving in land in Gen. 12. Tradition also held that when Jacob returned from his exile with Laban and bought a piece of land near Shechem ([Gen. 33:19-20](#)), that he dug a well within sight of Shechem. This is known as "Jacob's Well" or the "Well of Sychar" (Sychar could be

Shechem or a small village nearby). The Samaritans, and the woman at the well, would have understood themselves as the inheritor of a valid spiritual heritage in Samaria, in spite of being rejected by Jews as false.

TEXT:

The broad story of Jesus speaking with the Woman at the Well is the story of the progressive dawning of Truth. This encounter is centered upon the woman's religious and personal convictions being challenged, and then overcome by Jesus. Specifically, her religious convictions that she will be the inheritor of God's blessing through her ancestry, and then her "blindness" which has led her to have multiple husbands, are overcome by Jesus's offer of "living water" which will someday culminate in the true worship of God "in Spirit and in Truth".

- v. 4-6: John lays out the location clearly as Samaria, near Jacob's well, and that it is at noon, during the heat of the day. Jesus is the "stranger" here in Samaria, and anyone from the first century would have understood the cultural and religious conflict inherent in Jesus and his disciples travelling through Samaria.
- V. 7-9: In classic narrative form, this is the "rising action" where the conflict between Jesus and the Samaritan women occurs. Jesus the Jewish "stranger" and "enemy" of the Samaritans, asks the Samaritan woman for water. This prompts a resentful response, "You a Jew are asking a Samaritan for a drink?" The implication is that she is offended by an assumed sense of superiority on Jesus's part. Many scholars have also noted that a man by himself asking for water from a woman by herself likely crossed social proscriptions as well.
- V. 10-15: Jesus then utilizes her "offence" as an opportunity to reveal who he is, and what she is missing.
 - "If you knew who was asking..., and were able to not been offended, you could have *living water*." The Samaritan woman does not miss the import of "living" water, but she mistakes for meaning something like "fresh" water from the deepest part of the well (just like Nicodemus misunderstood "born again"!), and she asks him where is his bucket to draw so deep. And again,

her resentment surfaces, "...are you greater than Jacob, who gave us this well..." and again, she misses the *spiritual* implication of Jesus's words.

- Now Jesus lays it out clearly, "If you drink this *earthly* water, you will be thirst again. But I will give *living* water which will *spring up for eternal life*." (again, like his encounter with Nicodemus, the end he offers is *eternal life*).
- And again, she doesn't get what Jesus is saying, and says "give me this water, so I don't have to keep coming back to this well."
- V. 16-24: Seeing her continued blindness, *even in the middle of the day*, Jesus shows her that her offence is not rooted in the truth. Knowing that she has had multiple husbands, he almost casually asks her to bring her husband, and then reveals the existence of her past husbands and her current lover, and then uses it to teach her about his New Creation.
 - Her response is that she is now able to acknowledge Jesus as more than just the "Jew" before her, but a prophet. But she still insists that despite her moral failings, she still has claim to her spiritual heritage. – "Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."
 - At this moment, Jesus then undercuts *all* the religious heritage of Judaism and Samaritan worship by saying they have both failed to properly worship the Father. He proclaims - "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father *neither* on this mountain *nor* in Jerusalem." Rather, the claims of both have failed in proper worship – "...God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." And so, with his work as the Messiah, "...one day a time is coming *and has now come* when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks." Note that Jesus sees this as already happening through him and will be perfected when the Spirit comes! (see John 16:13!)
- V. 25-26: This is the climax of the story, as Truth has finally dawned upon the Samaritan woman that Jesus is not just a "Jew" or even a

“prophet”, but the Messiah! Her response is a statement, but functions as a question – “we know he is coming”, but are you the one? And Jesus lays it out clearly – yes, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.” So the Samaritan woman has come full circle, and now knows “who it is that is speaking to you...”

- V. 27-42: In the structure of John’s Gospel, signs are accompanied by conversation, which is then met with response. And in these final verses, John reports the response to Jesus. Will it be faith drawn into light and truth? Or will it be doubt, left in darkness and death?
 - V. 27 – the first response of that of the disciples, which is surprise that Jesus is talking to her, both as a Samaritan and an woman. Their response, it seems, is to misunderstand what Jesus is doing.
 - V. 28-30 – the next reported response is that the Samaritan woman, now knowing and *believing* what Jesus has said, had rushed back to town to tell everyone about the Messiah.
 - V. 31-33 – John swings back to the disciples, whose confusion now borders on obtuseness. They just want him to eat, and Jesus tells him that he has spiritual food they know nothing about!
 - V. 34-38 – Jesus, as he often does, now takes the opportunity to explain to the disciples what they are missing. While they are fussing about lunch, Jesus is here “to do the will of the father”, which is to bring *eternal life*! His words are terse – “look at the signs of when the harvest is ripe, don’t you see it? You and I are here to reap the harvest long prepared for this moment!”
 - V. 39-42 – John now draws the narrative out to the response of the people who have come out to see Jesus. They came because the Samaritan woman told them about what Jesus said to her, but now they believe because of what Jesus said and did among them. This short encounter at the well, has led Jesus to stay for two full days and to reap the harvest in Samaria.

REFLECTION:

1. What are some present-day examples of “Samaritan-Jewish” conflict? How does Jesus respond to the conflict?
2. Take some time to reflect on how the Truth slowly dawned upon the Samaritan woman that she was speaking to the Messiah. What things got in the way of that dawning?
3. Think about what it means to be *thirsty*. How does *thirst* reflect our spiritual condition?

March 15 - Lent 4

Propers - BAS page 291

Gospel: [John 9:1-41](#) - Jesus Heals the Blind Man

BACKGROUND:

While the Gospel of John is rich with symbolism and metaphor (light/dark; above/below; life/death; truth/blindness; flesh/Spirit etc.) the guiding principle of the Gospel is *New Creation*. That is, Jesus, who is the Word of Creation has come among us in the Incarnation in order to bring about a new creation, but now through death and resurrection, and the return of the Spirit. Scholars have located this idea in the Prologue ([John 1:1-14](#)) which describes the Word becoming flesh among us, which is then fulfilled in the *signs* of Jesus ministry and then in the *glory* witnessed in Jesus's death and resurrection. The story of Jesus healing the blind man in John 9, though, does lean heavily into the theme of light and darkness, as the New Creation Jesus brings is paralleled with the blind man receiving his sight.

The obvious echo here is the story of the Creation in Genesis 1. In that narrative, the world is *void* and *formless*, and *darkness* dominated the primordial ocean. But then the Spirit of God, hovers over the waters and God speaks the first act of creation: "...let there be light!" Following this, the LORD God then *orders* and *fills* the world with his good creation. In John, the parallel of New Creation is a similar process of light being spoken into darkness, but now it is a "re-creation" where the sin and death which has disordered and darkened the creation is undone by the glory and resurrection of Jesus. In that way, the story of the Blind Man in John 9 symbolizes his sin & death, which have kept him in darkness, being undone by Jesus who brings light and life into his life.

TEXT:

Set during the long sequence where Jesus is teaching and arguing in the Temple during the Feast of Booths (Day 4 of the New Creation, [John 7:1-10:21](#)), this story follows immediately on the heels of Jesus making a couple of bold claims:

- “I am the Light of the World, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but have the light of life.” (Jn 8:12) (one of the seven “I Am...” statements of John)
- the startling claim that he is one with God the creator, saying “Before Abraham was, I AM.” ([Jn 8:28-29, 58](#))

The Pharisees have protested these claims insisting that their place in the kingdom of God is firm because they are ancestors of Abraham, but Jesus is clearly indicating his work is to begin the New Creation for *all*, especially through his death & resurrection.

The story of the healing of the Blind Man, then, portrays the Blind Man who is happy and willing to undergo this New Creation in his healing contrasted with the Pharisees who remain in their blindness, arguing over the validity of the healing:

- v. 1-12: The Healing: Coming across the Blind Man outside the Temple, his disciples ask Jesus “who sinned?” that the blind man had been condemned to such a fate, him or his parents? (a common position in ancient Judaism). Jesus’s answer is that no one sinned, but he was born blind so that Jesus could teach about his New Creation, repeating again “...I am the light of the world.” (9:5) Jesus gives the blind man instructions to wash in the water of the Pool of Siloam (an echo of the water of creation?), and when he does so, the whole community witnesses his healing and the question of *who* healed him comes front and center. Ironically, the man does not know, as he could not see Jesus before he was healed!
- V. 13-34: The Interrogation – the arrogance and hubris of the Pharisees is on full display as when they are told about the healing, they are more concerned that it broke the sabbath, and strangely, that the Blind Man had been freed from his sin!
 - Phase 1 v. 13-17 – The Pharisees interrogate the man and proclaim the unknown healer (Jesus) as sinner for working on the sabbath. The crowd counters this judgment by saying “how can a sinner perform such a healing”, and the man affirms that at the very least the unknown healer must be a “prophet”. (i.e. have some authority to circumvent the Law)

- Phase 2 v. 18-23 – The Pharisees, obviously aware it was Jesus who healed him, and still unable to acknowledge the act of New Creation in the Blind Man, argue that he must not have been blind to begin with, and interrogate his parents. They sarcastically confirm his blindness from birth, and tell them to ask their son himself, for they were afraid that the Pharisees would punish them if they proclaim the healing.
- Phase 3 v. 24-34 – The Pharisees interrogate the healed man a second time, insisting again that Jesus’s actions were sinful. At this point the healed man confronts the Pharisees with reality: “...I was blind, now I see.” And when the Pharisees want to hear again *how* he was healed, the man boldly challenges them for their willful blindness of the good thing that has happened, and their stubborn refusal to recognize that Jesus must be from God. He actually outwits them with their own logic : “If God does not listen to sinners, Jesus must not be a sinner because he was able to heal me! He must be from God!” At this point, having been outsmarted, the Pharisees drive the healed man out.
- v. 35-41 – Spiritual Blindness: Jesus returns to the scene, and finds the healed man, who still cannot put Jesus’s face to his name. Jesus asks him, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” (i.e. the Messiah), and the healed man says, “Yes, tell me so that I may believe in him.” Jesus’s reply here is loaded with symbolism around faith and gaining sight, “You have seen him! He’s standing right in front of you and you are talking with him.” The healed man then boldly declares “I believe!” and *worships* Jesus. (not just gratitude, but acknowledgement of *who* Jesus is).

Here Jesus turns to speak to the crowd: “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.” In other words, the Pharisees who sought to judge both the man and Jesus, will remain in their blindness and be judged, but those who believe in Jesus will gain their sight and NOT receive judgement. (which is how the whole episode began, working from the assumption that the Blind Man had been judged.) The Pharisees, recognizing they now face judgement fall back on their self-perception as experts – “surely we are not blind?”, to which Jesus

replies, ironically, if you had been blind (like the man), you would have no sin, but because you do see, and implicitly refuse to believe, you will remain in sin.

REFLECTION:

1. Why were the Pharisees so upset with Jesus?
2. Who in this episode experienced *darkness*? How did they experience it?
3. Who is Jesus claiming to be in this encounter?
4. What things blind us in our lives? How can Jesus shed light into that darkness?

March 22 - Lent 5

Propers - BAS page 293

Gospel: [John 11:1-45](#) - The Resurrection of Lazarus

BACKGROUND:

While the Gospel of John is rich with symbolism and metaphor (light/dark; above/below; life/death; truth/blindness; flesh/Spirit etc.) the guiding principle of the Gospel is *New Creation*. That is, Jesus, who is the Word of Creation has come among us in the Incarnation in order to bring about a new creation, but now through death and resurrection, and the return of the Spirit. Scholars have located this idea in the Prologue ([John 1:1-14](#)) which describes the Word becoming flesh among us, which is then fulfilled in the *signs* of Jesus ministry and then in the *glory* witnessed in Jesus's death and resurrection. The story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead is *the* story of New Creation where the "life" and "light" of Jesus as the Word *literally* overcomes the darkness of sin and death that have marred Creation. (John 1:4-5).

Historically, at the time of Jesus ministry the idea of resurrection was debated among Jews. A number of OT passages that speak of bringing God's people back to life after the Exile ([Ezek. 37:1-14](#), [Isa. 26: 19-20](#), [Isa. 53:10-11](#), [Daniel 12:2-3](#)) had begun to be interpreted as predictions of *future* resurrection at the Day of Judgement. The issue was not settled, with Pharisees affirming the future resurrection, and Sadducees denying it, and the average person falling in line with one of those two positions. Jesus also speaks of resurrection before this moment with Lazarus:

- First in [John 2:19-22](#) after cleansing the Temple where he says "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."
- Second, he occasionally refers to "raising people up on the last day" through his ministry as the way his followers will receive eternal life (e.g. [Jn 5:21](#) & [6:39-40](#))

What is startling is that while Jews debated a *future* resurrection as reward for obedience to God, Jesus was speaking of his *present* resurrection which will begin the process of New Creation and the transformation of human nature.

TEXT:

Often seen as the climax of the “Book of Signs” (Jesus’s ministry before the passion of the “Book of Glory”) John’s dramatic story telling skills are on full display here in John 11. As he tells the story of Lazarus’s resurrection in three sections, with the first two used to build tension and dramatic anticipation:

- V. 1-16 – The Sickness that will not end in death but in glory. – Jesus main concern is an upcoming confrontation with death, where is glory will be shown and witnesses will *believe* in him.
 - The dramatic nature of the scene begins the build up with Jesus receiving news of Lazarus’s illness, and the *delaying* (v.6) going to Lazarus, (especially in light of John emphasizing Jesus’s love for them) and saying as he has several times before in his ministry, that this event was occurring to show Jesus’s *glory*. He assures his disciples that “this sickness will not end in death.”
 - When Jesus does decide to go see Lazarus, his disciples are worried about returning to Judea where the Jews are seeking to harm him. Again, Jesus turns the conversation back to his coming confrontation with *death*, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.” His disciples miss the point, and he tells them plainly – “Lazarus is dead.” – but that all this is so that the disciples will *believe*.
- V. 17-37 – I AM the Resurrection and the Life – Jesus arrives in Bethany to a scene of mourning, and the conversation with Mary & Martha again revolves around death and resurrection.
 - When Jesus arrives, Martha rebukes him “if you had been here, Lazarus would not have died”, but Jesus’s response is “He will rise again.” Martha responds with the affirmation of resurrection on the last day and that may be a comfort.
 - Here Jesus speaks his fifth “I AM” statement, but very specifically directed at the confrontation between life in him and death in the world: “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

- Following this, Jesus approaches the tomb of Lazarus, and we are told Jesus wept when Mary falls at his feet in grief, who also rebukes him for not coming. Why Jesus wept has been interpreted variously by commentators. Some suggest it was because he was moved by their grief, some that he grieved Lazarus's death too, some that he wept over their rebuke, and some that he wept over their lack of faith to see his bigger purposes.
- The final statement of the crowd in this section – “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?” – once again draws attention to the upcoming confrontation of life over death.
- V. 38-44 – The Resurrection of Lazarus – Jesus's raising of Lazarus is narrated in such a way to highlight again the confrontation between death and life, and the visibility of Jesus's glory in resurrection.
 - The episode begins with Jesus's command to roll away the stone from Lazarus's tomb, and Martha's caution that the body will stink after four days. This emphasizes the finality and corruption of death, which Jesus counters again with the prediction of glory - “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”
 - Jesus's prayer, as well, emphasizes that this whole episode was designed and played out so that people would *believe* in him.
 - John emphasizes that Jesus's calls out in command, a divine fiat of creation – “Lazarus! Come out!”
 - The detail of Lazarus being wrapped in the death shroud is followed with yet one final command undoing death when Jesus tells them to remove the grave clothes.

REFLECTION:

1. How is death portrayed in this story? how is Jesus portrayed? What does he think of death?
2. How does Jesus overcome death in our lives?
3. How is death the real enemy?

March 29 - Palm Sunday

Propers - BAS page 299 (At the Eucharist)

Gospel: [Matthew 26:14 - 27:66](#) - The Triumphal Entry

LITURGICAL NOTE:

Palm Sunday is considered the beginning of “Passiontide” and Holy Week. The Liturgy of the Palms is read at the beginning of the service, with a “enactment” or procession symbolizing Jesus’s triumphal entry, which is then contrasted later with a reading of the passion narrative as the Gospel reading during the Liturgy of the Word.

BACKGROUND:

In the Synoptic Gospels (Matt, Mark & Luke) the account of Jesus’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem is essentially his first visit to the city during his ministry, the culmination of a long journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. Along the way, many have questioned whether Jesus is the awaited Messiah, and in all the Gospels this “Triumphant” entry into Jerusalem represents the beginning of Christ’s Passion as he is hailed as the Messiah by the People.

- Messianic Expectations: First Century Judaism was rife with attempts to predict the signs of the Messiah’s coming, and of what he will do when he does come. Among the many signs of his coming was his arrival at Jerusalem in order to assume his kingship, defeat Israel’s enemies and usher them into an earthly flourishing. The Messiah would be a descendant of the line of David, a military leader and high priest all rolled into one. The memory of the Maccabean priest-kings of the Jewish revolt against the Greek’s two centuries earlier would have been the example to be perfected by the Messiah.
- The crowds that met Jesus would likely been made up of the many people who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover (Josephus records huge numbers of people), as well as the crowds that were following Jesus during his ministry.

- Matthew’s larger concerns in his gospel are often rooted in portraying Jesus as one who has fulfilled prophecy, and in particular, brought the *righteousness of the Kingdom of Heaven* to pass.

TEXT:

The scene of the Triumphal Entry can be divided into three straightforward parts:

- V. 1-5 – Jesus riding on the donkey in fulfillment of [Zechariah 9:9](#)
 - By telling his disciples to go find the donkey for him to ride into the city on, Jesus is essentially creating the fulfillment of Zech. 9:9, and by his actions claiming the status of Messiah.
 - The citation of Zech 9:9 points to two very important things.
 - **First**, Jesus is the *king* that they have been waiting for, but this should be no surprise since his Gospel message has been that the *Kingdom of God* has come near. His work as the Messiah is the fullest expression of God’s sovereignty, which seeks to bless. The Zechariah quote also notes the king’s coming is “gentle”, as well as lowly, as a donkey is a beast of burden, and not a war horse of a conqueror.
 - **Second**, it is implicit in being hailed as Messiah is a paradox and irony that Jesus will express his kingship in the coming passion and death during Holy Week. God’s sovereignty is expressed in his *sacrifice* for his people.
- V. 6-9 – The Crowds hailing Jesus as Messiah by quoting [Psalm 118](#)
 - Quoting from Psalm 118:25, the crowds shout “Hosanna!”, which grammatically means something like “give salvation now!”, but had come to be used as an acclamation of praise. (Ps. 118 was among the Hallel psalms sung at the Jewish festivals) In that way “Hosanna!” is simultaneously a plea to save and fulfill the expectations they had of freedom and victory over their oppressors, and a joyful shout of praise for his coming at last. Indeed, their cries included Ps. 118:21, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” Their joy is rooted in the long waiting for the Messiah finally coming to an end. The irony of the situation, though, is that Jesus’s mission will be the exact

opposite of their Messianic expectations, to the point that those who hail him one day as he Messiah, will a short time later shout “crucify him!” at his trial.

- More specifically, Matthew has the crowds shout “Hosanna to the Son of David!”, which adds the “Son of David” acclamation, referring to the Davidic line of Kingship. The crowds are hoping for a restoration of that line of Kingship, and of a new “David” who was the greatest of all Israel’s kings.
- V. 10-11 – Who is this?
 - Matthew then pulls the scene back to a city-wide view, where the whole city is astir with this exciting news of the Messiah’s coming.
 - More importantly, Matthew takes the opportunity to emphasize the question that people in the city are asking – “Who is this?” This is the central question of the Gospels – “who is Jesus?” In the case of the Triumphal entry, the people in the city seem to think he is a prophet from Galilee. Again, as often happens in the Gospels, there is a partially correct understanding of who Jesus is, but never full understanding until after the crucifixion and resurrection, which reveal who he *truly* is.

REFLECTION:

1. What are our expectations of Jesus?
2. What does kingship mean to Jesus? What kind of King is Jesus?
3. What are we rejoicing about as Jesus is proclaimed King? Why does this happen around the Passover?