

# ALTON BAPTIST CHURCH

## eService

**Sunday 28 March 2021**

### **The triumphal entry**

**“Who is this?” -- “This is Jesus..”**

#### **Welcome**

**Our Lord leads and guides us all, as He has done in the preparation of this Service; and we will all receive a blessing. So, wherever you are let us begin.**

#### **Opening Prayer**

**O Lord we ask that you give us open minds and hearts as we come to You at this time of worship with You and others. That you will strengthen our belief in You as we listen to the YouTube videos, read Your Word, speak with you in our prayers and as we consider what Your Word has to say to us to encourage and enrich our lives.**

#### **Our 1<sup>st</sup> hymn.**

**If we are to make progress along a road, we need a clear path. “Get out of the way” or put another way, “Make way, make way”. So that is what this hymn is all about. We need to make way for Christ our Lord and “Clear the path.”**

#### **Make way, make way.**

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78iCdVc5LVM>

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#### **Meditation on Our Lord’s Prayer**

**This expanded version appeared in a recent Barnabas Fund magazine and was written by one of their founders.**

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**Based on Matthew 6 : 9 – 13**

**Our Father in heaven,  
Who alone knows our brokenness and pain.**

**Who honours us by making us Your children  
Equal members of Your family  
And gives us a new identity  
As Your beloved chosen people,**

**Hallowed be Your name,  
For you are pure and sinless,  
You are the great I am,  
Before whom we stand in awe  
God of truth and righteousness,  
God of mercy and justice .**

**Your Kingdom come,  
Let Your glorious rule  
Covered the earth  
And banish all injustice,  
Cast out all corruption  
And write all wrongs.  
Set Your people free from oppression  
And let Your reign begin in us.**

**Your will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven,  
Help us to accept Your purposes,  
Your good and perfect plan for our lives,  
As one day all creation will submit  
And bow before You  
In whom is perfect peace and freedom.**

**Give us today Our Daily Bread,  
For we are poor and needy,  
And we depend on You.  
Father, provide our food and water,  
Our clothing and shelter.  
Day by day, our eyes look to You.**

**And forgive our debts,  
As we also have forgiven our debtors.  
Father, forgive our many sins  
through the shed blood of Your son  
Who died for us and rose again.  
Release us from the burden of our debts  
And give us grace to forgive  
Those in debt to us.  
Father, make us generous and merciful.**

**And lead us not into temptation.  
Father, give us faith to overcome  
Our fears, doubts and worries.  
Father, do not test us more than we can bear.  
Give us the strength to endure patiently,  
The grace to accept and persevere.  
Give us a life of godliness and contentment.**

**But deliver us from evil one.  
Father, rescue us from Satan's Wiles,  
Free us from bondage,  
Snatch us from calamity, death  
And the injustice of evil men.**

**For Yours is the Kingdom,  
The power and the glory.  
Father, establish Your sovereign rule.  
Glorify Your name and keep us safe  
For now an eternity.**

**Amen**

**Reading for today**

**Matthew 21 : 1 - 11**

### **Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King**

**21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethpage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."**

**<sup>4</sup> This took place to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet:**

**<sup>5</sup> "Say to Daughter Zion,  
    'See, your king comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
    and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"**

**<sup>6</sup> The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. <sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. <sup>8</sup> A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut**

branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

**“Hosanna to the Son of David!”**

**“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”**

**“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”**

<sup>10</sup> When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked,

**“Who is this?”**

<sup>11</sup> The crowds answered,

**“This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”**

## **2<sup>nd</sup> hymn**

In our second hymn we need to remind ourselves that most often we need to swing wide the gates or doors to pass through into an area or building. So, this hymn is about this need. Gates / doors are to bar our way to limit who passes through. (Unfortunately, I could not locate a hymn with the words displayed; so please listen.) Thank you.

**Swing wide the gates.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ah7LibaXQTA>

## **Intercessory Prayers**

- For those who are ill; particularly those suffering long Covid that has disproportionately affected over 45-year-old females. That people will see the need to be vaccinated for their health and that of others. We are all in this together.
- For a return to normality, whatever that is.
- Our leaders in whatever post they hold will be guided by you in whatever matter that requires their attention and decision.
- That whilst many will reject you as of not much help during the pandemic, there will be those who have found great strength in your arms. May they continue in that believe.
- We need to remember to pray for ourselves; it is not selfish; it is important for if we are not sustained then we may not be of any use to others.
- For health and strength, too many people seem to have ‘gone downhill’ rather too fast.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> hymn

Well, we cannot celebrate this day without this song that says it all.

Ride on, ride on in majesty.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MD9rMkIS1yw>

Let us look at His word.

### The triumphal entry

**“Who is this?” -- “This is Jesus..”**

What should we say today about Christ’s triumphal entry, that many of us have not heard a hundred times before? So, let us see if we can take a new approach. Our reading ends by the crowd asking a question **“Who is this?”** The crowds answered, **“This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”** So, who is this person who enters Jerusalem surrounded by crowds waving palm branches and laying them at His approach? No doubt we would probably give slightly different answers. His believers would acclaim Him as their Saviour, but to those who do not so acclaim Him, then He is an impostor, a charlatan, a nobody, a heretic, an evil person, and a non-entity. So, who do you say He is?

Well, when we look at those who enter and have entered Jerusalem they have fallen into many categories and in number beyond our scope today. So, it occurred to me that when we visit a country their ‘Arrival card’ that one must complete asks us to state the reason why we are arriving in that country? So, we will choose three – was He – A Conqueror? (I am sure that is not on an arrival card) – A Visitor? – A Citizen? How do we fit into these categories as we go about our Lord’s work?

A Conqueror – He was surely such in His subsequent death. He conquered sin and was raised to life. Herod may have killed His earthly body but not His spiritual body. [The Romans did the deed] {Now Jerusalem has the distinction of being the most fought-over city during its long history, attacked some 50 times, captured, and recaptured 44 times, besieged 23 times, and destroyed twice. Of course, the Brits had to get into the act when the last conqueror was General Sir Edmund Allenby, who entered Jerusalem on foot leading his horse out of respect for the Holy City and Christ riding on a donkey, on 11 December 1917.} When we go about our Lord’s work, we need to have that attitude of mind that we are going to conquer and triumph over evil and opposition as we are doing His work in His name. Jesus said in Matthew 10:34 <sup>34</sup> *“Do not suppose that I have come*

*to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”*  
Was He not a Zealot? with His radical teaching and voluntarily dying as the last great sacrifice for the remission of our sins and for everlasting life. We need to be bold – as the hymn goes – **Be bold, be strong, for the Lord your God is with you ... for I'm walking in faith and victory ...**

**Visitor** – Probably. Jerusalem today has 3.5 million tourist arrivals annually. (London 19 million). Some would say I am pushing my luck here classifying Jesus as a visitor. He had been here before, but His life had been spent away from here; so surely most people at that time would see Him as a visitor. Indeed, the crowd asked, “Who is the person?” They did not recognise Him. He needed to be here, the centre of power and where the leaders were based, for the earthly showdown that would end His ministry with him as a human amongst us. He was going to make a great show that started with His entry. Does our entry have people say – “who is this person?” Some of us had jobs that had people say this about us, especially if your job title started off with the same two words as that of Her Majesty. Is the name of the game for us to stand out as a visitor or to merge into the background? In NZ visiting our daughter we can do both, usually the latter. Perhaps when going about His work both are appropriate depending upon the circumstances. Jesus chose both in His ministry. Appearing publicly and in private. As I mentioned previously – back to Ruth – and her words in 2:10 *<sup>10</sup> At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, “Why have I found such favour in your eyes that you notice me—a **foreigner**?”* She recognised her status in others words a visitor and she is shown in her story as both standing out and merging into the background as is appropriate. Please do read her story. So even if we are a visitor, we can still be effective in Our Lord’s work. Indeed, some would argue that being a visitor gives one an opportunity to shine, as being a stranger, people may wish to hear a new voice. Does it really matter whether you are or are not a visitor; it is one’s presence that counts.

**Citizen** – Surely, He was this?! Some say one has either to be born in a place or lived there for 20 years to qualify as a citizen; so, on this basis Jesus did not qualify on either count. I raise this as on the past Sunday those of us who live in England, Wales and NI were asked to complete our Census form and the question that asked how we described our citizenship – British – English – Scottish – Welsh – Northern Irish. (or some similar wording) What did you answer? Here on earth even our State must ask us this question to ascertain to which country we identify as being a citizen? (For those outside of the UK must read this in bewilderment!!!)

**For our Lord's work – “who do we say we are?” Hopefully, we have a firm answer. Is His kingdom not everywhere? Are we not citizens of our Lord's work in all places? Thus, we are citizens of everywhere. So as Christians we are all citizens of one country: God's country. Thus, are we not always citizens everywhere?**

**We read in Ephesians 2: 11 *‘Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth ..... --<sup>12</sup> remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.’* -- So we are citizens with Christ in His work.**

**Also, in Philippians 3:20 <sup>20</sup>*But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>21</sup> who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.’***

**So surely Christ was a citizen of Jerusalem?**

**Let us be encouraged by what we have read in God's Holy Word as we enter Holy Week when we celebrate His death on a cross, in my opinion this is the centrality of Christianity, and His rising in triumph over death. Remember, without the crucifixion, there could be no resurrection.**

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Hymn**

**Let us end with a rousing hymn!**

**You are the King of glory**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtccZ2y-88I>**

#### **Closing Prayer**

**Revelation 4:11**

**<sup>11</sup>‘You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being.’**