

## LESSON TEN

# MISSING THE MESSIAH

*But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.*

MATTHEW 21:15



## REFLECTION

Disappointment always stems from unmet expectations. Our level of disappointment in any situation is directly tied to the difference between what we hoped for and what actually happened. What are some of your biggest disappointments or letdowns in life?

## SITUATION

As Jesus' time on earth drew to a close, he entered Jerusalem as a king . . . but not the exalted monarch whom many would have preferred. He rode a humble donkey, not the white horse of a conqueror. Dismounting, he promptly caused a scene at the temple and incurred the wrath of Israel's religious leaders. These head-scratching events, coupled with Jesus' other odd sayings and unusual views, caused many to doubt his messianic claims.

## OBSERVATION

*Read Matthew 21:1–17 from the New International Version or the New King James Version.*

## NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

<sup>1</sup> As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage 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 fulfill 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."

<sup>12</sup> Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. <sup>13</sup> "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'"

<sup>14</sup> The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. <sup>15</sup> But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.

<sup>16</sup> "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him.

"Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read,

"From the lips of children and infants  
you, Lord, have called forth your praise?"

<sup>17</sup> And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

#### NEW KING JAMES VERSION

<sup>1</sup> Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. <sup>3</sup> And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has needed of them,' and immediately he will send them."

<sup>4</sup> All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

<sup>5</sup> "Tell the daughter of Zion,  
'Behold, your King is coming to you,  
Lowly, and sitting on a donkey,  
A colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

<sup>6</sup> So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. <sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. <sup>8</sup> And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

"Hosanna to the Son of David!  
'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'  
Hosanna in the highest!"

<sup>10</sup> And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?"

<sup>11</sup> So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

<sup>12</sup> Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. <sup>13</sup> And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

<sup>14</sup> Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. <sup>15</sup> But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant <sup>16</sup> and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?"

And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read,

'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants  
You have perfected praise?'"

<sup>17</sup> Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

## EXPLORATION

**1.** Do Jesus' instructions at the beginning of this passage strike you as a little odd? Put yourself in the sandals of one of those disciples. What are you feeling and thinking?

---



---



---



---



---



---

2. Prophecies in Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9 both related how the Messiah would enter into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Why didn't this fact alone convince all the masses who witnessed his entrance that Jesus was the Christ?

---



---



---



---

3. How did the multitudes respond when asked who Jesus was?

---



---



---



---

4. Why did Jesus get so angry when he entered the temple area?

---



---



---



---

5. What were the children doing during this temple-cleansing episode?

---



---



---



---

6. As all these odd, apparently conflicting events were going on, what do you think the followers of Jesus were doing—those who had spent the previous three years traveling with him, living with him, listening to him, and learning from him?

---



---



---



---

## INSPIRATION

Some of us have tried to have a daily quiet time and have not been successful. Others of us have a hard time concentrating. And all of us are busy. So rather than spend time with God, listening for his voice, we'll let others spend time with him and then benefit from their experience. Let them tell us what God is saying. After all, isn't that why we pay preachers? Isn't that why we read Christian books? *These folks are good at daily devotions. I'll just learn from them.*

If that is your approach, if your spiritual experiences are secondhand and not firsthand, I'd like to challenge you with this thought: *Do you do that with other parts of your life?* I don't think so.

You don't do that with vacations. You don't say, "Vacations are such a hassle, packing bags and traveling. I'm going to send someone on vacation for me. When he returns, I'll hear all about it and be spared all the inconvenience." Would you do that? No! You want the experience firsthand. . . . Certain things no one can do for you.

You don't do that with romance. You don't say, "I'm in love with that wonderful person, but romance is such a hassle. I'm going to hire a surrogate lover to enjoy the romance in my place. I'll hear all about it and be spared the inconvenience." Who would do that? Perish the thought. You want the romance firsthand. . . . Certain things no one can do for you.

You don't let someone eat on your behalf, do you? You don't say, "Chewing is such a bother. My jaws grow so tired, and the variety of tastes is so overwhelming. I'm going to hire someone to chew my food, and I'll just swallow whatever he gives me." Would you do that? Yuck! Of course not! Certain things no one can do for you.

And one of those is spending time with God.

Listening to God is a firsthand experience. When he asks for your attention, God doesn't want you to send a substitute; he wants you. He invites you to vacation in his splendor. He invites you to feel the touch of his hand. He invites you to feast at his table. He wants to spend time with

you. And with a little training, your time with God ~~can~~ be the highlight of your day. (From *Just Like Jesus* by Max Lucado.)

## REACTION

7. Do most of your ideas about Christ come from what others have said about him or from your own personal interactions with him? Explain.

8. How can a secondhand faith lead to disappointment with Christ?

9. It is one thing to get excited about Jesus in a parade-like, rah-rah atmosphere. It is another matter altogether to be devoted to him and follow him daily. What factors keep you from a more personal relationship with Jesus?

10. One of the teachings of the New Testament is that Christians are God's temple (see 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16). Given that fact, what kind of cleansing might Jesus like to do in your own soul?

11. Picture a bunch of kids shouting in the reverent temple courts. What does this scenario teach us about worship, about celebration, and about excitement over the person of Christ?

12. How can time with the Lord, which leads to deeper intimacy with him, minimize our feelings of disappointment with God?

## LIFE LESSONS

God will often surprise us or disappoint us because our expectations of him do not correspond with his will or with ultimate reality. We may have strong ideas (and wrong ideas) about how life should unfold, but then we crash head-on into God's purposes, and confusion sets in. The solution to this common dilemma is to surrender our opinions and hopes about *what should be* to *what actually is* in God's perfect plan. When we spend time getting to know the Lord firsthand, and then approach the situations of life with an open mind and a yielded spirit, we are able to avoid needless disappointment. Remember that God isn't whatever we want him to be. He is who he is. And he will do what he will do.

## DEVOTION

Lord, so many people stood near you and watched you during your time on this earth, and yet they missed you! They allowed false expectations and the reports of others to keep them from a personal encounter with you. Don't let me make this same mistake. Stir my longing for you so I will pursue you with passion and come to know you as you truly are.

