

Subject: A Time of Triumph and Tears

Scripture: John 12:12-23

This event is usually referred to as Palm Sunday and also known as Christ's triumphal entry. It is one of the few events found in all four gospels (Mt. 21; Mk. 11; and Lk. 19). The scene has shifted from a private dinner in Bethany to a loud public parade on the road into Jerusalem. Jesus had been honored and dishonored at the supper in Bethany. Jesus was honored by Mary as she anointed His body with the costly ointment, but He was dishonored when Judas criticized her lavish gift. In a similar way He was honored and dishonored in Jerusalem. On this day Jesus was honored as they cried "Hosanna," but by week's end He would be dishonored as the crowd called for Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified.

THE PREPARATION FOR JESUS' ENTRY

Let's turn to **Luke 19:28-36**. Jesus sent two of His disciples into the village to find a colt, a young donkey, on which He would ride into Jerusalem. The only reason the disciples gave was, "The Lord has need of him." Corrie ten Boom, a Dutch watchmaker and Christian who helped Jews escape the Nazi Holocaust in WWII, asked, "Do you think that donkey that Jesus rode on ever thought all that applause was for him?" The owner of the colt was evidently someone who believed in Jesus. He never questioned or argued with them, but willingly gave them the colt.

The Bible tells us that this was a colt on which no man ever sat. The Jews regarded animals that had never been ridden or used in the field as especially suited for a holy purpose. We also have here a demonstration of the Lord's power over nature as He rode on a colt that had never been ridden. There was a horse riding stable with a sign out front that said: "We have small horses for small folks, big horses for big folks, slow horses for folks who want to ride slow, fast horses for folks who want to ride fast, and for folks who have never ridden horses, we have horses that have never been ridden."

THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS

At this dramatic entry into Jerusalem Jesus presented Himself officially as the Messiah. This was the first time Jesus actually presented Himself to the people. His hour had finally come. There were two crowds of people there. One huge crowd (thousands of people) that came to celebrate Passover was surging to meet Him and another crowd that came from Bethany (vs. 17-18). Jesus came to them in humility, riding on a colt, not riding on a white horse. That comes later in Revelation 19. They laid palm branches before Him, a symbol of victory and joy. **Revelation 7:9-10**⁹ *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;*¹⁰ *And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*

The people cried out "Hosanna" which means "Save now." They acclaimed Jesus as their Savior, Deliverer, and King. They were quoting Scripture from **Psalms 118:25-26**²⁵ *Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.*²⁶ *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.* This was one of the Hallel Psalms, a group of praise psalms (Ps. 113-118) sung by Jews traveling to the annual religious feasts.

THE PROPHECY ABOUT JESUS' ENTRY

All of this happened just as the Scripture said it would. Jesus was on the Father's timetable and He was fulfilling the Father's plan ("it is written"). **Zechariah 9:9** *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*

As with other prophecies, most of the people either didn't know them or didn't seem to take them seriously. Even His own disciples didn't understand that Scripture was being fulfilled at that moment. They were ignorant actors in the drama. They were ignorant of many things. They would only come to realize it after His resurrection, possibly as a result of Jesus' teaching to the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Lk. 24) when He explained the Old Testament scriptures. We can understand the exact time when Jesus entered the city and was crucified if we look carefully at **Daniel 9:24-26** ²⁴ *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.* ²⁵ *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.* ²⁶ *And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.* The prophecy speaks of 70 weeks (weeks of years) or 490 years. From the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem (445 B.C.) will be a total of 69 weeks (483 years). Putting all this together sets the date of Jesus' entry at 30 A.D., when the prophecy says Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself. He would die for others.

THE PAINFUL PREDICTION OF JESUS

We turn again to **Luke 19:37-44**. The crowd was excited, but Jesus was sad. It was time of triumph and tears. Jerusalem did not know the time of their visitation, the special moment in time when their Messiah came. Now it seemed like the people would receive Him as king, but in a matter of days they would reject Him and call for Him to be crucified. They thought they would crown Him king. He knew they would kill Him. They thought the kingdom was coming. He knew judgment was coming. John MacArthur said: "Hell is full of people who admired Jesus."

THE PREVIEW OF THE CHURCH

In verses 20-22, some Greeks (Gentiles) wanted to see Jesus. We can be sure they did get to see Him because of what Scripture says, **John 6:37** *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* From this point Jesus will turn to the Gentiles and they will be part of the church.

I want you to think about what those Gentiles said in verse 21, "We would see Jesus." That should be the desire of every person. They wanted to see Jesus for the right reason...not out of curiosity like many in the crowd...not to see Jesus sit on His throne so all their personal needs would be satisfied. They wanted to see Him because He could satisfy their needy souls. Jesus says, "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

