



**John 12:12-19**  
**The King Who Came to Die**

12 The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!"

14 Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

15 "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt."

16 His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

17 Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness.

18 For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!"

Before I begin to exegete these verses, I want to set before you two questions to think on.

***Who are your greatest enemies?***

***What do you desire Most from God?***

If you were reading along with me chances are that if your bible has headings these verses are called "The Triumphal Entry" kids usually a triumphal entry occurred when a King or an Emperor returned to his capital city having won a great victory over an enemy. The people would greet him and shower him with flowers and praise. He would ride in on a magnificent war horse or a in a Chariot with his prisoners and all the loot he had taken going before him.

Now here of course, the people aren't celebrating a victory over an enemy that had already happened, ok to a small extent the people are celebrating the victory of death that had occurred when Jesus raised Lazarus, but what they were really celebrating was a victory they were hoping would soon happen.

The date of this event is most likely the first day of the week of Christ's crucifixion. Here is Jesus on Sunday, being greeted as a King, but remember that on Friday, He will be led out of the city again to a hill called Golgotha, or the place of the skull, and there be crucified between two thieves.

Remember also that Jesus knew all the time that that was what would happen to Him, no one is forcing Him to go to Jerusalem to die, it is for this purpose he came to earth, this is the hour that Jesus came for. And that is why he is doing something very uncharacteristic. You remember that every other time the people had tried in anyway to make Him king He had slipped away. Many of these celebrants were

probably Galileans and you'll remember that they had previously tried to make Jesus their earthly king in John 6 and that Jesus had slipped away to a mountain alone to avoid that.

That is one of the reasons the people no doubt are overjoyed, Jesus is finally, doing, they believe, what they wanted Him to do!

The disciples at this point, we read, did not understand what on earth was going on. They'd just been told once again, that Jesus was going up to Jerusalem to die, that Mary had just anointed Him for burial. Now rather than simply walking in, we read in Matthew 21 that Jesus had sent the disciples to a village to fetch them a donkey that had never been ridden before, and then there is this celebration as he enters the city.

Now, they haven't a clue what is going on. But later after the resurrection, they will think look back on all of this with a new understanding and they will realize that by doing this Jesus was fulfilling to the letter Messianic scriptures, and it will become clear to them. The King of Israel indeed rode in to Jerusalem, just as Zec. 9:9 said He would, but not to do what the crowd wanted, he came willingly to do what the world NEEDED.

Now what did the crowd want? Well that's not hard to figure out from what they are saying and doing. What are they doing? They are waving palm branches. Palms are an emblem of victory. When Simon Maccabee drove the Syrian garrison from Jerusalem in 141 BC and liberated the capital from the control of the evil Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes the people of Jerusalem had greeted Simon with singing and the waving of palm branches. Later during the ill-fated rebellion against the Romans, the Jewish rebels would issue coins with Palms on them.

What are they saying? Hosanna which means "Save I pray!" Or literally, Salvation is Now Here. Why the one who comes in the name of the Lord, the Messiah, has arrived. So the call Jesus, not just Son of David, but **The King of Israel** – that one would have turned the hair of the chief priests prematurely gray, because they knew the Romans would see that as an act of rebellion.

They are saying this is the day we've been waiting for the Messiah our salvation is here! And they are right, and dreadfully wrong at the same time.

What is the salvation they think is about to occur? They are looking for a political salvation from the Romans. From the perspective of the crowd, the Davidic Kingdom is being restored, and it's Passover, the perfect time because there are maybe a million Jews in the city. The Roman Garrison of a thousand and their governor Pilate is as good as gone. The end of Roman rule, and the end of all their taxes, their collaborators, and their oppression, is within sight.

Excitement is further whipped up because people are coming from Bethany who were at the raising of Lazarus and saying, this is the man you've been hearing about who raised Lazarus from the DEAD! Well who else could do that but the Messiah!

This crowd is so large and excited, the Pharisees are thinking *All is lost, we are never going to be able to arrest him while there are all these crowds are around. They'll rip us to pieces before they let us take the man they hope will become their king.*

But Jesus didn't come to fulfill the desires of the crowd, he didn't come to proclaim himself their earthly king - not that He is not a King. Both the new and old Testaments declare Him to be the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, he is a King, and the Messiah but so much more than a mere earthly king that greatest of emperors pales in comparison and his kingdom embraces not merely a nation but the entire universe – incidentally never believe the old lie that Jesus never said He was a king – Turn ahead to

**John 18:36** Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

**37** Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

He also did not come as so many other false Messiahs had to start rebellion against the Romans. There were a number of things about Christ's entry in Jerusalem that should have clued the people into that fact. First he did not come at the head of an army, and second he did not come in riding on a war horse, he came in riding a donkey. A donkey is not an animal of war, it is always associated with peaceable purposes. And that is fitting because Jesus has come not to make war but to make peace. *Peace between who?* Man and God. Jesus had come not to start a rebellion of the Jews against their Roman Emperor. HE came to put an end to rebellion that had started long ago when man had rebelled against His Creator in the garden, and brought Himself under His wrath and curse. And the only way Jesus could do that was by bearing the punishment of His Sheep Himself and dying in their place on the Cross.

That after all was exactly what the Prophets had said He would do, Isaiah had written of the Messiah in *Isaiah 53:4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.*

*5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.*

*6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

*7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.*

Daniel had even prophesied when it would happen and what would be the aftermath: *Daniel 9:26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

Exactly 483 years after God gave that prophesy to his servant, to the very day, it was fulfilled.

And Zechariah had said how He would approach Jerusalem, the daughter of Zion in Zechariah 9:9 " *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Now a few applications I want to go from the least to the most important:

**First** - Sometimes this event is commemorated in what is referred to in the church calendar as “Palm Sunday” – I remember in the Catholic school I attended as a child we made little Palm crosses, and then later those palm crosses were burned and the ashes used for Ash Wednesday.

As Andreas Kostenberger, rightly points out, *“The popular observance of Jesus’ triumphal entry on ‘Palm Sunday’ does not adequately recognize that the crowds waving of palm branches, rather than being based on a true understanding of Jesus, was in fact based on a misconception of Jesus’ identity. Hence it would be more proper to mourn people’s inadequate notion of the Messiah at the present occasion than to perpetrate such a misunderstanding by focusing on the externals of the event. Ironically, this kind of observance of Palm Sunday risks placing contemporary believers on par with the original Jerusalem crowd.”*

**Second** – This crowd’s reaction shows us how it is very possible for men to appear to come to Christ, to be enthusiastic about him, even to use all sorts of good language, and yet not to come to Him for the right reasons or really understand who Jesus is. John tells near the end of this chapter that *John 12:37 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,*

The crowd had an excited and Frothy Experience – *Woohoo Jesus is here to give me what I want, he’s come to fulfill my agenda: In their case it was Romans out, restore our nation. Today we can do exactly the same thing expecting Jesus to give us -*

- **Health and Wealth**
- **Signs, Wonders, & Excitement**
- **A Strong and Moral Nation**
- **Victory for my political position**

Then when they don’t get what they want, they end up going out the back door or simply falling pray to whatever huckster tells them he can fulfill their agenda.

Let me make a sub-application of this if I can - Sheep/Shepherd relationship never existed

They like some of the aspects of his public ministry

They have hopes that He will fulfill their agenda

Patriotic

When you are hitting the enemies and the issues the also despise, they are with you, but when you aren’t, they aren’t!

Calvin writing to Bulinger at the beginning of the Reformation *stated the generality of men are more ready to acknowledge us as preachers than as pastors*

Difference between the two

The pastor is a shepherd

*John 10:3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*

*4 "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.*

***Acts 20:28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.***

Now the modern church is happy to enter into this kind of relationship by and large. One of the reasons that we are committed not to going over about the 250 mark without planting new churches is because most Pastors, myself included, cannot really shepherd more than that

So Why did Jesus come? -

***John 20:31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.***

***Luke 9:23 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.***

***24 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.***

Finally here we see Jesus coming on a Donkey as the prince of peace to proclaim peace but He is coming back to bring judgment:

***Rev. 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.***

***12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.***

***13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.***

***14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.***

***15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.***

***16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.***

***So once again - Who are your greatest enemies?***

***What do you desire Most from God?***

***Is it things you want God to give you, or is it the salvation you most need?***