

“The Triumphal Entry”

John 12:12-19

John 12 has four divisions:

Jesus is anointed at Bethany [1-11] which we considered last week.

Triumphal entry into Jerusalem [12-19] our study tonight.

Jesus is sought by the Greeks [20-36]

Jesus is rejected by the Jews [37-50]

The importance of what is called the Triumphal Entry of the Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem is evident because all four gospels record the event.

John's Gospel seems to emphasize the vast crowds that shouted “Hosanna”. The other gospel writers include some details that John omits.

The people come from near and far to Jerusalem for Passover and the people numbered in the hundreds of thousands for this special week.

We have seen, especially in the Gospel of John, how Jesus “walks among the prophets” as He fulfills the OT Scriptures. Jesus told the Pharisees that if they believed Moses that they would believe in Him **“for Moses wrote about Me”**.

Paul begins the Book of Romans by defining the Gospel as that which **“was promised through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures.”**

The Gospel is not a New Testament innovation, or God's “Plan B”, as some have tried to present it. There is one gospel and one common salvation!

Here in John 12:12-19, we have the record of another fulfillment of an OT prophecy as Jesus fulfills the prophecy of **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.**

I am reminded of other prophecies by the prophet, Zechariah, that were fulfilled by Jesus Christ

Think about what you know to be recorded in the New Testament as I read some selected verses from Zechariah.

Zechariah 11:12

12 Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.

Thirty pieces of silver is the bribe paid to Judas.

Zechariah 12:10-11

"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

Zechariah 13:1

"In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

John 19:34 "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out."

"There is a Fountain Filled With Blood that Flows from Immanuel's veins."

Zechariah 14:4

4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east.

John 8:1 "But Jesus went up to the Mount of Olives."

Zechariah 14:21

Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite [merchandiser] in the house of the LORD of hosts.

John 2:16, As Jesus threw the moneychangers out of the temple: "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of **merchandise**."

The four inspired records, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, each give some details of the event and we will read each of them in order to have this unusual event in our mind as it was recorded by the four evangelists.

(Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40)

Matthew 21:1-11

Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 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. 3 And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

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

5 "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.'"

6 So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them.

8 And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

9 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!" [Psalm 118:26]

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

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

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Mark 11:1-11

Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; 2 and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it. 3 And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here."

4 So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. 5 But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?"

**6 And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go.
7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. [NOTE THE MIRACLE. Cf. vs. 2 a colt tied, on which no one has sat.]**

8 And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

**"Hosanna!
'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'
10 Blessed is the kingdom of our father David
That comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!"**

11 And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

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Luke 19:28-40

When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 And it came to pass, when He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples, 30 saying, "Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring it here. 31 And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing it?' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.'" 32 So those who were sent went their way and found it just as He had said to them. 33 But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "Why are you loosing the colt?" 34 And they said, "The Lord has need of him." 35 Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. 36 And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road. 37 Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, 38 saying:

**""Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!"
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"**

39 And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." 40 But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

Now we will consider the record in the Gospel of John.

John 12:12-19

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!"

The Triumphal Entry of the Christ into Jerusalem is an unusual thing. In almost all of the events before this time we find Jesus avoiding crowds and telling those He healed not to tell anyone.

But this event is very public and the enthusiasm of the multitudes incites the Pharisees to exclaim in utter panic and frustration:

"Look, the world has gone after Him!"

It is very important to remember that Jesus voluntarily came to Jerusalem knowing that His hour [the time of His death] had come.

This open declaration of His majesty is not hard to explain. The time has come for Jesus to go to the cross as the Lamb of God. It is the Passover Week, and Christ who is the true Passover is going to die for the sins of His people. The blood of the true atonement for sin will be shed in a few days.

In John 6:15 the people tried to make Him their king but He withdrew from them. Here He declares that He is indeed the King of Israel as He fulfills Zechariah 9:9.

All of the types intended in the sacrificial system are summed up in the cry of John the Baptist, **“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”** John 1:29

The Triumphal Entry occurred on Sunday of the Passover Week and because of the spreading of the leaves of the date palm in His path it has been called “Palm Sunday”, the Sunday before what is known as “Easter Sunday”.

“Palm Sunday” and “Easter” are not biblical terms, but they are so established in tradition that we are obliged to use them if we are to communicate with the world.

Speaking of tradition, the religious world has accepted “Good Friday” as the day of the death of Jesus on the cross. I will not labor on that now except to say that even allowing for only a part of a day and a part of a night to count as “three days and three nights” you cannot make a time line that puts Jesus on the cross on Friday.

The case for the day of the crucifixion is much too detailed to be explained in this brief study. You need to read all the relevant Scriptures and draw some time lines. Then you have the complication of overlaying our 24-hour days, Sunday, Monday, etc. which begin and end at midnight with Jewish days which begin and end at nominal sunset or 6 pm.

“So the evening and the morning were the first day.” [Genesis 1:5]

The key to understanding the day that the crucifixion occurred is to know that there was a High Day Sabbath in this Passover Week and a High Day Sabbath was never the same day as a weekly Sabbath. There were two Sabbaths in the crucifixion week and Jesus was crucified before the first Sabbath. Jesus was put on the cross either on Wednesday, if you count full 24-hour periods as “three days and three nights” or the latest day in the week would be Thursday if you count parts of days and nights to be “three days and three nights”. It simply was not “Good Friday.”

Why is that important? It is important that we sort out tradition from truth.

Tradition is not bad unless it contradicts the Scripture. Does it matter to you to correctly understand the Scriptures?

(12,13a) A comparison of the four Gospel records shows that Jesus, who is the Christ, arranged every detail of this public display.

Everything that Jesus said or did was in fulfillment of the OT Scriptures. Here the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 is fulfilled in every detail.

This is His public proclamation that He is the Messiah. The multitudes in Jerusalem had heard about Lazarus (18).

The crowd lay down palm branches in His path. The palm tree is a symbol of righteousness and a symbol of Jewish nationalism.

Psalm 92:12

The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,

Palm branches are used to express joy at the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:40). You may recall that we saw Jesus as the literal fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles in Chapter 7.

(13b) They kept on shouting, “Hosanna!” Save now!” They are not just shouting “Hurrah.” It is “We beseech You, O Jehovah, save now.”

Psalm 118:15-26 one of the most quoted Messianic passages in the New Testament.

Psalm 118:15-26

15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation Is in the tents of the righteous; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly. 16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly. 17 I shall not die, but live, And declare the works of the LORD. 18 The LORD has chastened me severely, But He has not given me over to death.

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, And I will praise the LORD. 20 This is the gate of the LORD, Through which the righteous shall enter.

21 I will praise You, For You have answered me, And have become my salvation.

22 The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. 23 This was the LORD's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. 24 This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.

**25 Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity. 26
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from
the house of the LORD.**

The crowds are greeting Jesus as their “Liberator.” The cry is “Save Now!”

They celebrate the arrival of their King, but have misunderstood the nature of His Kingdom.

They are saying, “Deliver us from the Romans and restore our nation to its glory.” The multitudes did not understand the nature of the Kingdom of God and wanted a political king. But Jesus is the Shepherd-King of Israel and His Kingdom is not of this world, i.e., not a political kingdom but a spiritual kingdom where King Jesus rules in the hearts of men and not from a literal earthly throne. And sadly, many Christians still long for an earthly kingdom.

(14,15) Cf. Zechariah 9:9; 13:1, the Shepherd-King, Messiah Himself.
Daughter of Zion is Zion herself, viz. Jerusalem.

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.**

A young donkey, never ridden or worked. Only beasts that were never worked were used for sacrifice (Numbers 19:2).

His birth: of a virgin; His burial: new tomb. See the majesty and the dignity of His Person, yet in humility He rides on a donkey. This Man can be no threat to the Romans. This is not a king on a stallion! But this is the only King this world will ever be given.

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.

(16) We can believe and yet not fully understand. They could not understand that One with such power would be put to a shameful death. What was the downhearted comment of the two on the road to Emmaus? **“But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.”** Luke 24:21]

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.

(17, 18) Best translation: “And the crowd that had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead kept on testifying. And for this reason the multitude went out to meet Him, because they had heard that He had performed this sign.”

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

(19) “You are gaining nothing....”

Total frustration!

We intend to kill Him and this mob is calling Him their King!

Sad note: Same crowd a few days later will be crying out: **“Crucify him!”**

As far as personal application, do you see the majesty of Jesus in His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem? Do you see that He is proclaiming Himself to be Messiah as Jesus fulfills the prophecy made by Zechariah some 500 years earlier?

That is not all. Yes, Jesus fulfilled all of the OT prophecies of the Messiah and He brought in the spiritual Kingdom of God that has grown for over 2000 years as the church waits expectantly for Christ’s visible and final return at the end of this present age.

I will close this message by reading a part of an exposition of Zechariah 9 by Charles Alexander.

“There is that is the corrupt human heart which always yearns after the outward and visible. The imposing view which many have of the Church as of a great institution which impresses the world with its majesty and influence; its reproduction of the kingdoms of this world in outward pomp and splendor and show is not the view of the prophets. There are mighty ecclesiastical institutions which involve themselves in intrigues, diplomacies, and worldly policies, which issue impressive encyclicals and bulls, fiats, and declarations which influence governments and which send out ambassadors and delegations and legates to court and conference, but in none of these things do we perceive the Kingdom of Christ. The wearing of a royal purples and the building up of hierarchies, nobilities, aristocracies and principalities, is not the Church but the world. The Church is that spiritual remnant, that elect company of the redeemed who do not number in their ranks many mighty or nobles, who consist rather of the weak things of the earth and things which are despised and nothing in the eyes of contemporary society, but who march to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They are a people apart, who cannot mingle or coalesce with the world in its ways and fashions, as they are separated as holy unto Christ, and carry the cross He gives them to bear.

Nor will the scene change, brethren. This is the manner of the Kingdom to the end of time. This is our Millennium. This is the Kingdom desired by prophets and kings and righteous men of old, to whom it was revealed that not unto themselves but unto us did they minister the things which are now reported unto us through them that preached the gospel unto us with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven [1 Peter 1:12].

It is thus the apostles taught us to regard the Old Testament prophecies, for search the entire New Testament and there is not a word spoken there of a future national glory. Nor is there any other Kingdom of Christ and of God spoken about in the New Testament but the Kingdom of Grace of which we believers are a part. And this is the Kingdom which was prophesied by the Zechariah's and the Isaiah's of old time, and anticipated by David and Solomon. If the church is not the kingdom, then the Church is not the subject of ANY prophecy. But Paul has told us that we are the Israel of God, that the children of Abraham are the election of grace, and that the Church is the eternal purpose of God from before the foundation of the world.” **Charles Alexander**

The Lord Jesus Christ rides on in majesty [Psalm 45:4] announcing that He is indeed King Jesus! Is Jesus your King?

Jim Gunn
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