

04-13-14 – Jesus Enters Jerusalem – Messiah or God?

John 12:12-19; Rev. 7:9-12

On a Palm Sunday some time ago, 5-year-old Stephanie sat on her aunt's lap while they listened to the pastor's sermon together. He described Jesus' approach to Jerusalem and how the crowds cried, "Hosanna, Hosanna!" At that, Stephanie perked up and began to sing, "Oh, Hosanna, now don't you cry for me!"

(Brenda Fossum, Duluth, MN, "Heart to Heart," Today's Christian Woman. From a sermon by C. Philip Green, We Want To See Jesus, 4/14/2011)

A little boy was sick on Palm Sunday and stayed home from church with his mother. His father returned from church holding a palm branch. The little boy was curious and asked, "Why do you have that palm branch, dad?" "You see, when Jesus came into town, everyone waved Palm Branches to honor him, so we got Palm Branches today." The little boy replied, "Aw Shucks The one Sunday I miss is the Sunday that Jesus shows up"

READ: John 12:12-19 (NIV)

KING OF ISRAEL – v. 11-13

A Great Crowd was there. Jews and others from all over the known world made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem each year to celebrate the great feast of Passover. It was required by the Law. In addition, Jesus was a drawing card this year. Word was out about Him. They heard of the miracles and signs He performed in various places. Many were curious – many were suspicious. The things Jesus did were not able to be replicated by magicians and sorcerers.

Jesus was anointed by God Himself to accomplish these acts. He must be the King they were waiting for. The King of Israel. So they got Palm branches and prepared the celebration to welcome their King. It was a celebration of victory. **Lev. 23:40 – “On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days.”** They went out to meet Him – shouting – Hosanna (save now) – save from what? Did they really know what they were saying, and yet they were helping fulfill prophecy. What were they thinking?

John quotes **Ps. 118:25-26 – “O LORD, save us (Hosanna); O LORD, grant us success. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD...”** He continues... **“Blessed is the King of Israel.”** Their deliverer.

O.T. prophecies speak of Messiah – the deliverer of the people – KING! A “man” sent by God to deliver and restore Israel. “A MAN” – There was no deity connection in their minds. Jesus was anointed by God – Shown by signs and miracles.

Jesus just came from Bethany - Lazarus – raised from the dead – a great miracle – proved Jesus' qualifications as King of Israel. The crowds followed him to Jerusalem.

What a resume! He MUST be the One. Jesus is KING of Israel; the one who could deliver the nation and overthrow the Roman occupation. He could restore Israel to its proper condition, the way God intended.

People flocked to Him because of the mighty works He did. What are you looking for in your King? Deliverance, Healing, Direction, Wisdom? Do you pray for Him to break through for you to get what you want or need? Are you looking to Jesus because of His powerful works, because you need or want a miracle in your life, because He can make your problems go away? What motivates you most toward Jesus?

Do you buy into the hype out there that if you have faith, you can ask whatever you want and get it? What if you don't get it? You don't have faith? God doesn't care about you or love you? You are sinful? Is Jesus just your King here on earth – a man who works miracles? Are you looking for a magic Genie? Or GOD?

MESSIAH OF THE JEWS – (v. 14-15)

John quotes Zechariah's prophecy as Jesus rides in on a donkey's colt.

***Zech. 9:9 - Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.***

This was a contradiction of sorts. A conquering King would ride in on a stallion – probably white – or ride in a gold chariot pulled by white stallions. But Jesus rides in on a Donkey? He came in humility. It was a sign and a fulfillment of prophecy. There was more to the story than they could imagine at the time – Even his disciples didn't get it then. They didn't realize until after His resurrection that He was fulfilling prophecy and He was not coming in military victory, but to die to bring spiritual victory and prove He Is GOD.

Jesus didn't complete the mission they were waiting for or meet the people's expectations. Actually, He let them down. He didn't come in as their conquering King or the delivering Messiah and take over the Roman government who occupied their homeland. That's what they expected their King/Messiah to accomplish. He didn't bring their deliverance from oppression. He let them down by His humility and submission. What kind of King/Messiah was this? He was misrepresented – maybe even an imposter. He definitely was NOT the Messiah/King they counted on. He was a let-down.

They chose to switch sides and eliminate this false Messiah. They chose to wait for the "Real Deal." – A conquering King – a real Messiah from God – Not Jesus. And so, they continue to wait to this day – but they missed it. And so, they joined the Pharisees and others, and they changed their shouts from "Hosanna" to "Crucify."

GOD OF THE DISCIPLES – (v. 16-18)

Even Jesus' disciples thought He might deliver Israel in a more physical and politically powerful way. They may have been let down too. They all fled when He was arrested, except Peter – yet Peter had his own story of denial. But something happened that changed their minds along the way. I want to think of it like prevenient grace – God must have moved in them somehow so they all got together again in that locked room where they learned of His resurrection and then saw Him again. A spiritual light went on for them to understand.

That is revelation – what we all have received by God to grasp who Jesus really is. To us who believe, He is Messiah, King and God all three. The disciples grew into this belief and acceptance.

The others came to Jerusalem to see Jesus because of the miracles – sensation seekers...

- He opened the ears of the deaf
- He healed the lame and gave sight to the blind
- He raised the dead to life again – most recently, Lazarus
- He was someone special – anointed by God
- He was a powerful teacher, speaker, orator, charismatic

Sensational signs draw crowds! To this day.

John 6:30 (NIV) - *So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?"*

So this large crowd followed Jesus into Jerusalem, expecting Him to do something spectacular in the capital city – like overthrow the Roman center of power by God's anointing on Him. N.G. – Not the plan. God's plan was for Jesus to overthrow Satan's center of power over humanity – sin – and Jesus accomplished this mission on the Cross! The Pharisees had it right...

***"See, this is getting us nowhere; look how the whole world has gone after Him."* (v. 19).**

KING, MESSIAH, AND GOD - (READ: Rev. 7:9-12)

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

**"Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb."**

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

“Amen!

**Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!”**

The scene shifts to the future – Heaven. A great multitude – too many to count or fathom. Multicultural Multitude – not just Jews, but all spiritual Israel. The nation is restored. All races and languages of the earth. As different as they are, they all have one thing in common... White Robes!

v. 14 explains, ***“they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”***

Jesus’ blood that was shed on the Cross has washed our sin tainted robes and made them white and pure, the forgiveness of sin that brings us into the presence of God through Jesus. Jesus is so much more than what those crowds imagined that day in Jerusalem. He is more than the King of Israel, more than Messiah of the Jews, He was and is GOD!

These people were waving palm branches in Heaven – sound familiar? Remember this was a known celebration gesture from the O.T. However, this celebration is the “real deal.” A celebration in Heaven to honor Jesus Christ – the Lamb of God – the One who is on the throne with God the Father. These are the true believers – not sensation seekers. These have received the gift of God’s salvation and have received the reward of that faith in Jesus – Eternity in Heaven eternally thankful.

No more false hopes – no more incorrect expectations – no more doubts – no more questions – Only Thanksgiving for ever to Jesus Christ our King of all kings, Messiah, and God. The whole multitude shouted in sincerity,

“Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

Then all the host of Heaven – believers, angels, every creature fell to the ground and pronounced the seven-fold blessing as they worshipped Jesus and the Father on the throne. Surrounded by AMENS.

“Amen! Praise and Glory and Wisdom and Thanks and Honor and Power and Strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”

Seven is the number of perfection, wholeness, completeness. The perfect blessing to the perfect King, Messiah and God – Forever and ever. Amen!

Will you be there? Have you yielded your heart to the true King, Messiah and God, Jesus Christ? Your eternal reward is only a prayer away.