

Behold, Your King is Coming

When Jesus presented Himself as King and Messiah to Israel by entering Jerusalem on a donkey, He did this not only to fulfill prophetic Scripture regarding Himself, but He was also stirring up the crowds to go after him. This would in turn, cause the Jewish leaders to seek to eliminate Him that very same week.

Jesus displayed incredible power and control through His actions, and in light of all He did, He deserves way more than what He received that day. We're going to see that Jesus received superficial, phony worship from half-hearted followers, but Jesus deserves more than that. He deserves much more than that.

JESUS DESERVES MUCH MORE THAN HALF-HEARTED FOLLOWERS WHO FADE AWAY.

V. 12 -

What does John mean by "the next day"? In verse 12, we are five days before Passover. That would be the Sunday before Jesus would go to that cross. This is also known as the triumphal entry or Palm Sunday.

Who is this large crowd that John is writing about? The Passover Feast was at hand. This was also known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. One week before this began, huge numbers of the Jews who lived outside of the city of Jerusalem started to populate the city. The Passover was a required Feast of Israel for all males to attend (Deuteronomy 16:16, and Leviticus 23:4-8).

These people were arriving to Jerusalem a week in advance to prepare themselves for the Feast, and if you will remember what John told us back in chapter 11 and verse 56, the talk of the town among these people was this: Is Jesus going to come to the Passover? Is He going to make an appearance?

Why were they wondering this? Because word had quickly spread that the Pharisees wanted to arrest Him. They had given orders that if anyone knows where He is, they should report it to the religious leaders so they could take Him under custody, because they did not want this crowd of people believing in Jesus.

We know that Jesus had left Jerusalem and spent a few days away with His disciples, but now that a required Feast is approaching, the people all want to know: Will He show? Is He brave enough to show His face?

And as they are asking these questions, the excitement about what Jesus has done continues to rise. Could this be it? Has God given Israel her Messiah? Is the kingdom that God has promised to us about to appear? Is the King coming?

How did they hear He was coming? Well this event of Jesus raising Lazarus had gone viral. News travels fast, and the crowds had discovered that on Saturday, Jesus was only two miles away in Bethany on the other side of Mount of Olives, spending time with Lazarus and his family.

Now, it's Sunday morning, and we know from the other gospel accounts that Jesus had made preparations to go to Jerusalem. He had prepared an animal to ride into the city on. He had his disciples retrieve that animal, and He set His sights on the temple.

V. 13 -

To them, the sign of a palm branch would have meant national victory. Palm branches were associated with the nation of Israel celebrating what God has accomplished for them (Lev. 23:40; Rev. 7:9).

Hosanna is a transliterated word from Hebrew that means save us, save us now, or give salvation now. When they said, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, they were quoting Psalm 118:25-26. This meant they were giving Him the title of the Messiah - the Christ - the anointed One of God who was to come.

For centuries, Israel had been anticipating the day when Christ would come into this world from God and for them to quote Psalm 118 when Jesus is entering Jerusalem. They were saying: Jesus is the Messiah, and not only that, they added on their own, even the King of Israel. Our Messiah/King is here! The one who will establish peace for our nation and will wipe out all Israel's enemies is here!

Vv. 14-15 -

Jesus rode into town on the animal of His choice - a young donkey. I would imagine this would have caused some confusion for everyone around. Why a donkey? If our King is coming to conquer, wouldn't He be coming on a horse of war? Why is He coming on a donkey of peace? John didn't want us to be confused at all about this. Why did Jesus present Himself to Israel as her King riding on a donkey? Because that is exactly the way God in His Word planned this event to happen (Zech., 9:9). When John wrote "Fear Not," he was likely quoting Isaiah 40:9.

[Daniel recorded dates for when the Messiah was to present Himself to Israel, and Israel should have had the date set on their calendars. The Church does not have any dates to set about future things, but in this case of the past, Israel was allowed to set a date. In Daniel 9:24-27, we read about 70 units of 7 that needed to take place, beginning in 445 B.C. when King Artaxerxes issued the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. If we understand that the 70 units of seven is speaking of 70 times 7 years, that would give us a total of 490 years. Daniel noted that 62 units of seven plus 7 units of seven would mark a day of the coming of an anointed one, a prince. If you do the math from 445 B.C. Plus 62 years of seven, and 7 years of seven, you have 69 times 7, which is 483. If you look at the day when King Artaxerxes issued the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, which was in the ninth month (Nisan), possibly on the first day of the month (Neh. 2:1-8), and you add 483 years to that, you get a surprising answer. Calculated all out, you end up with Nisan 1, 445 B.C. + 173,880 days ($483 \times 360 = 173,880$ -- 360 days/year in the Jewish calendar of that time) which ends up being this date according to our calendar: April 6th, A.D. 32. This day, likely is the exact day that Jesus made His entry into Jerusalem on a donkey. The exact day that Daniel said the anointed prince would come was the day we are reading about right now.]

V. 16 -

John tells us they missed it. It wasn't until after Jesus was glorified that they learned all of this was prophetically written about Jesus. It wasn't until after Jesus had raised from the dead and ascended into heaven that we were able to learn what really took place. It was after the Holy Spirit came and illuminated the Scriptures to the disciples that they understood that this was all a fulfilled prophecy of both Zechariah 9 and Daniel 9.

John wanted to add that little note for us to know how it all worked in their minds at the time, and adding this note, he actually gave us the purpose for the triumphal entry. Why did this happen? Every action Jesus took was carefully designed to meet 2 purposes. #1 Jesus needed to fulfill prophecy concerning Himself. #2 Jesus needed to go to the cross. He attracted the crowds to Himself so that the religious leaders would finally take action against Him which would culminate in Him hanging on the cross later that week. According to John, those are the 2 reasons for the triumphal entry.

Vv. 17-18 -

John tells us the reason why the crowds were so excited. They had heard that He raised a man from the grave, and they wanted be a part of all the excitement. They weren't interested in spiritual healing from sin. They wanted to see a show.

V. 19 -

This isn't new to us. John has repeatedly told us over and over so far that the phony, religious leaders hated Jesus. They were jealous of Him. They rejected His offer of grace, they refused to admit their sin, and they hated the idea that the masses of the people would look to Jesus instead of them.

There is a lesson I think to be learned from all this:

CHRIST DESERVES MUCH MORE THAN HALF-HEARTED FOLLOWERS WHO FADE AWAY.

So, how do you not fade away? How do you stand the test of time?

I think John wrote our text in a way that gives us 3 practical acknowledgments we must conclude in order to not fade.

Acknowledgement #1 - We must conclude that Jesus is Lord.

Have you actually concluded that Jesus is Lord?

Acknowledgement #2 - We must conclude that studying the Bible is a lifelong journey.

There's a lot of people out there who want to see God do great things in their life, but there are very few willing to sit under the weight of the Word of God year after year, decade after decade to strengthen themselves for godliness.

Acknowledgment #3 - We must conclude that resisting Christ will lead to frustration.

In verse 19, what do we find of the Pharisees? Frustration. These men resisted Christ. That only led to frustration. If we resist Christ, it will only lead to frustration.

Are you frustrated? Maybe Christ would have you do some honest business with Him today.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, He set his sights on going to a cross to die for us in order to give us eternal life. In light of that, He deserves much more than a half hearted following.