

## Presentation of a Triumphant, Humble King

John 12:9-19

*Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel*

**Introduction:** One of the aspects of life that we all have contemplated over the last few weeks are the things that we can so easily take for granted: the ability to shake hands, give a hug, or go over to each others houses uninvited (maybe that was NEVER a good thing). We miss interaction with grandkids, classmates, and the beach. Never has gathering in person on a Sunday morning seemed so sweet or visiting a loved one in the hospital seemed like such a wonderful opportunity. When things are taken away from us we realize the height and breadth of the gifts we had, and it enhances the joy we have when they are given back, desiring to cherish, not take for granted, the familiar parts of life.

As we come to familiar stories in Scripture, we are challenged by the same thought. We often take things for granted in stories like the triumphal entry on Palm Sunday. How did Jesus get back into the city after having a death warrant out? How did everyone know to assemble on Sunday morning? When we take these for granted, we are left with thinking, "God just did it, I guess. Jesus is God, right, so He just made it happen." This leads to weak thinking about Jesus, His humanity, and the immensity of the process. There are several reasons we need to think clearly about the events and meaning of things like the triumphal entry<sup>1</sup>:

- 1. We affirm the Inerrancy of Scripture, and believe that each of the gospel accounts fit together perfectly, telling a full story of Jesus' life** - We believe that we can harmonize the accounts of the NT to understand how Jesus orchestrated events in His life, not contradicting or borrowing the facts, but each were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write exactly what God would have them to write.<sup>2</sup> It means we should *think* through the things Scripture gives us, and not leave it to assumptions.
- 2. We want to see Jesus, particularly His humanity, so that we can know Him (Phil. 3:7-11) and follow in His steps (1 Pet. 2:21)** - Salvation is about God, and Jesus' work brings us into a worshipful relationship with Him. Jesus not only becomes a Savior, but a Lord that is knowable and wants us to follow Him. He lived life in a way that we can emulate, by being dependant on the Father and the Spirit, and lived it perfectly. We want to know Him *in* His sufferings and *how* He suffered, so that we can be like Him. So we want to understand how He lived, not as Superman dressed up like Clark Kent, but as a real man, flesh and blood, who faced this life just like us. Jesus functioned as a man with all the resources available to us (i.e. the Word and Spirit - think back to His temptation in the Wilderness - Luke 4:1-13). He is our great High Priest (Heb. 4:15-16) **who can sympathize with our weakness**, who was tempted in every way as a man, yet without sin. So we can draw near with confidence to the throne of grace.
- 3. We understand that no one took Jesus' life from Him, but He laid it down freely** - John 10 tells us that Jesus is the door (10:7) and the good shepherd (14). He laid down His life on

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to the teaching of Dr. Doug Bookman for piecing together the events of Jesus' life and Passion week. For resources of his go to [www.bookmanministries.com](http://www.bookmanministries.com) or go to [www.sermonaudio.com](http://www.sermonaudio.com) and type in his name. It has re-shaped how I think through the life of Jesus in Scripture.

<sup>2</sup> For a great read of the gospels and Passion week, invest in a "*Harmony of the Gospels*" by Robert L. Thomas and Stanley N. Gundry, or "*One Perfect Life*" by John MacArthur

His own accord, meaning no one took it from Him. This story is tragic only in the fact that humanity and demonic hosts *thought* they were in control, and that they could stop Jesus by killing Him, only to have their greatest victory be their greatest defeat, and Jesus' seeming tragic, illegal, and heinous death become His greatest victory. **He laid down His life freely, knowing the Father would raise Him again** (Acts 2:24), and He did it according to God's definite plan (Acts 2:23) and for His sheep (John 10:11, 15, 17, 18).

### I. **The Offer of a Humble King**

**John 12:14-15** And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, <sup>15</sup> "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"

**Zechariah 9:9** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

#### A. A King rides in

We start this story at one of the most earth-shattering events this world has ever seen. As Jesus crested the Mt. of Olives and entered into Jerusalem for the last Passover of His life, the city erupted in unison.

#### B. A King rides alone

Jesus came into the city riding a donkey, which was a clear fulfillment of OT prophecy. A donkey was not necessarily an odd mode of transportation for a king (see 2 Sam 18:9 as Absalom rode a donkey after he made himself king), but the fact that Jesus rode alone, humbly. Conquering kings would ride in with an entourage, with people trumpeting ahead and conquered kings in shackles. But Jesus came into His city as King, but did so humbly, alone, riding resolute to His awaiting death.

### II. **The Offer of a National King**

**John 12:12-13** The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "**Hosanna!** Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

**Psalm 118:22-26** The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. <sup>24</sup> This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. <sup>25</sup> **Save us,** we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! <sup>26</sup> Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD.

#### A. The Messianic Shout

The crowd shouted a familiar Psalm together, a Hilel Psalm, one that anticipated the inauguration of messiah. This was recited year after year, and so it made sense that they shouted, **Hosanna!** **Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!** Hosanna is a transliteration of the Hebrew word that means "Save now", or "save us", and that is what they recognized in Jesus as He entered. This was an appropriate response. Jesus was truly offering Himself to His people as their Messiah, and their hope was that He would fulfill all that had been prophesied. Jesus entered in on the exact day that He decided, and Luke says that if the people were silent, the rocks themselves would cry out, as creation itself recognized what was going on, that redemption was near.

### B. The Messianic Miss

The problem of the story is the problem we face today. Jesus came to offer Himself as King, but He did it on His terms alone. When it was realized that He was the only way, there was a turn from acclaim to a desire to kill, mainly among the religious leaders. They would see fit that Jesus would not take away their control and power, and were willing to compromise their own beliefs to kill the One who could actually bring about what they longed for the most.

### III. The Offer of an Personal King

Question #1 - How did all the people know where and when to show up?

Question #2 - How did Jesus get back into a city that was looking to arrest Him at first sight?

Question #3 - If the people welcomed Him on Sunday, why did He die by Friday?

### Events that put Jesus in Jerusalem on the perfect day of Messianic Presentation (or Palm Sunday)

- **FEAST OF DEDICATION - DECEMBER - JERUSALEM** (John 10:22-39) - 3 1/2 Months between the end of this feast and the week before Passover

John 10:24 - If you are the Christ, tell us plainly

John 10:25-30 - I told you, and you do not believe....The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe, because you are not part of my flock. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I gave them eternal life and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.

John 10:31 - The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him - This was on the basis or accusation of blasphemy - because a man was making Himself equal with God

Jesus countered by pointing to the works that He was doing, and they should believe based on them.

They sought instead to arrest Him, but He escaped from their hands

Jesus is now a fugitive, they have tried to kill and seek to arrest Him. So He travels across the Jordan River to the place where John had been baptizing and waited there (John 10:40-41). This place is called Perea.

### *Why did Jesus go here?*

This was out of the jurisdiction of the overseers in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was overseen by the Sanhedrin from a religious side and Pilate politically. After Herod the great died (soon after Jesus was born), the territories were divided up between sons of Herod and appointees from Rome. Herod's son Antipas was given rule over the areas of Galilee and Perea. Pilate would have wanted to appease the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, since his job was two fold: 1) **collect taxes**, 2) **keep the peace**. Antipas did not need to appease the Jews in Jerusalem because it was not his area of governance, thus this was Jesus **avoid and evade tactic for the time being**.

- **EVADING & TEACHING IN PEREA** (Luke 13:22-17:10)

### Luke 13:31-35 - Pharisees from Jerusalem try to convince Jesus to come back

Their ploy was to convince Jesus that Herod was a bigger threat to Him than they were. This was partially true. Jesus called Herod Antipas a fox (not a positive term) and knew the insidious side of Herod, since it was he who put **John the Baptist to death** after being seduced by his step daughter (Matt. 14:1-12).

**Jesus knew their play**, and again pointed to His works as proof of who He was, and reiterated that when the fullness of time would come (twice He uses - today, tomorrow, and the third day, which is a Jewish figure of speech meaning fullness), He would go to Jerusalem.

He lamented over the fact that Jerusalem killed the prophets of old, and how He longed to gather them in His arms.

Then He told the Pharisees standing there: **I tell you, you will not see me until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"**

This is exactly what was shouted when Jesus entered into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. But if Jesus was a fugitive and couldn't get back into the city without getting arrested, and the qualification He gave to the Pharisee's was a saying that *they* would never say, how in the world did Jesus orchestrate this?

### **HEALING OF LAZARUS SETS THE STAGE FOR RE-ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM** (John 11:1-54)

- Jesus was approached to go back to Bethany to heal his friend Lazarus. This was going back into the danger zone to the point that the disciples said, "**Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?**"(8), and Thomas said, "**Let's also go, that we may die with Him.**" (16).
- Jesus loved Lazarus, but was so concerned for His friend that He waited **2 more days** before travelling to visit His friend (6). This was the only time we see Jesus purposely delaying doing a miracle, and He did it to **bring glory to God and to glorify the Son of God through it** (4)
- This was one of Jesus most **poignant, visible, and proactive miracles**. In Jewish culture, they did not embalm bodies, so after 4 days not only was the spirit of that person truly gone, but the decomposition process would have started (see verse 39). In other words, after 4 days, a person was considered good and dead. Secondly, there would have been a large group gathered to mourn Lazarus, and many who were from Jerusalem. Thirdly, Bethany was about **2 miles from Jerusalem**, so the results of this miracle would reverberate there.
- This miracle solidified the desire of the religious leaders to **kill Jesus (53)**. The Pharisees already sought to kill Him for blasphemy, but now the **Sadducees** were now on board. The Sadducees controlled the temple and did not **believe in the resurrection**, so the fact that Jesus did such a clear miracle was a personal affront to them.
- The reason now to kill Jesus was not religious, it was **personal and sinful**. "*What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.*" (47-48)

**NOTE:** This is a huge point of why people reject Jesus, both then and today. It is not for lack of knowledge, but a lack of willingness to give up control of life. The members of the

Sanhedrin **knew** that Jesus raised the dead to the point that if He continued to go on, the whole nation would be swayed. Unbelief finds its source in pride and selfishness, *refusing to believe and convincing oneself to rid itself of the truth.*

- Jesus took His disciples and went to a small village called **Ephraim** to the north, near Samaria, which put Him on the outskirts of Judea's jurisdiction.

**JESUS TRAVELS WITH PILGRIM SAINTS TO THE PASSOVER** (Luke 17:11-19:27; Matt. 19:1 - 20:24; Mark 10:1-52)

- From Ephraim, Jesus still desired and set about to enter Jerusalem for the Passover, and here He had a master stroke. Luke 17:11 says something strange if we understand the geography of the land. From Ephraim, the text says, "**On the way to Jerusalem** (south of His location), He was passing along between (or literally "in the heart of") Samaria and Galilee. This means that Jesus **went North to go South**. But why was this such a master stroke?
- Passing through Samaria would have provided cover from His enemies, since Jews did not like Samaritans (they were viewed as Jewish half-breeds, since they were a result of compromising with Assyria - see 2 Kings 17 for the back story)
- Jesus was from Galilee, so this was His homeland and He knew the lay of the land very well
- This put Him back in the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas
- This provided cover by travelling with **the pilgrim saints coming for Passover**. Groups would travel together for safety purposes (this was seen when Jesus' parents "lost" Him when He was 12 travelling back from Passover - Luke 2:41-52)
- We know that there were **2 main routes from Galilee to Jerusalem - *the Ridge and the Rift*** - We know that Jesus took the Rift Route, which again would have kept Him out of sight until He was ready to appear. He crossed the Jordan and entered through Jericho (Luke 18:35, 19:1) before making His way to Bethany
- He taught specifically about His kingdom, requirements of it, and the fact that He was going to die. He also did miracles along the way (10 lepers, Bartimaeus, Zaccheus in Jericho - Luke 17:12-19; Matt. 20:29-34), and this created anticipation from the throng that was with Him making their way into Jerusalem. This all set the stage for His coming into the city exactly the way He wanted.

**JESUS PREPARES TO ENTER JERUSALEM TRIUMPHANTLY** (John 11:55-12:11)

- Jesus entered back into Bethany 6 days before the Passover, most likely heading into Friday night, which is Shabbat. Since Bethany was a Sabbath zone away from Jerusalem, He would be safe to stay there until Sunday.
- **John 11:55-56** says there were some who had gone ahead of the group to purify themselves before Passover. Since there were so many people flooding into Jerusalem, one had to get there early in order to get it done before the festival started. The **general consensus question** seemed to be: ***Do you think He'll show up? Do you think He'll come at all?*** This was due to the fact that the Pharisees had put out an arrest order for Jesus as soon as He was seen.

- After Mary anointed Jesus body, a large crowd learned that Jesus was coming. This was most likely prompted by the travelling crowd Jesus had been with. They learned the answer to their question: **He's coming, and it's on Sunday morning!** This is what those who had seen Lazarus already had been testifying in Jerusalem (John 12:17-18)
- The text is clear that the crowd was excited to see Jesus, but they also wanted to see Lazarus. **Why the intrigue with Lazarus?** Passover was a feast when God delivered His people from a foreign power. If this Messiah could raise people from the dead, they liked their odds in taking on Rome militarily.
- As a result, the chief priests made plans not only wanted to kill Jesus, but wanted to **kill Lazarus** (again).

#### IV. **The Rejection of a Saving King**

This brings us back to the city of Jerusalem on that most glorious day when Jesus offered Himself as Israel's king. It was Passover, celebrating God's deliverance of His nation from a Gentile overlord. They had a man who did miracles, raised the dead (pretty important in battle), and rode in fulfillment of prophecy. So why the rejection? What turned them from Sunday to Friday? They remembered prophecy, but forgot the deeper prophecy. **They remembered God would deliver His people nationally, but forget that He promised *before that* He would deliver them from the deadly effects of sin back in Genesis 3:15.** They focused on temporal freedom rather than spiritual and eternal freedom. They wanted political freedom but not spiritual. **When Jesus put down the Pharisee's and Sadducees on the Temple Mount on Monday and Tuesday, the people feared that they would be shut out of the Temple (by Sadducees) or the Synagogue (by the Pharisee's - see John 9:22).** They wanted a Jesus that would fight for them, but not one that demanded of them. They wanted a Jesus made in their image, that worked according to their plan, rather than yielding to His.

#### Concluding Thoughts

**Jesus moved heaven and earth to be Passover Lamb that was needed.**

Not only did God ordain it before the foundation of the world, Jesus faithfully delivered, not as Superman, but as a faithful man, who was as wise as a serpent yet harmless as a dove (Matt. 10:16)

**Jesus offered Himself truly to His people, but He offered Himself on His terms, not theirs**

This is what Jesus continues to do today. There is no salvation without Jesus, and anyone who desires Him must enter the narrow door (Luke 13:24), must bear his own cross and count the cost (Luke 14:25-30) and renounce all that he has cannot be His disciple (Luke 13:33). Jesus opens His arms wide to us today. He has done all the work to save, but He will not compete. He takes us on His terms, meaning that in believing, we turn from controlling our own life and yield it to His, receiving forgiveness of our sin and our life comes under the Kings life, since He is Lord.

**Questions to answer:**

- Why is it so important to understand the fact that Jesus was both fully God and fully man? What happens to our understanding and appreciation of Jesus if we automatically assume everything happened in His life simply because He is God?
- Jesus gave up His independent use of divine attributes, meaning there were times He exercised these (miracles, knowing people's thoughts, etc), and at other times He did not access them. How does that help us understand how to follow His example of using the Word and the Spirit in all of life (see Luke 4:1-13 for an example). How does the fact that Jesus experienced the same type of pain, sorrow, and temptation that we face, and who can sympathize with us, help us trust Him in times of uncertainty (Hebrews 4:15-16)?
- People have not changed from Jesus day to today. In what ways do you see people in our culture desire to have the benefits that Jesus offers without yielding themselves to Him? What are areas of our life that we have not yielded completely to Jesus?

**Ways to pray:**

- Continue to pray for those affected by the virus - families in our church, area, and around the world. Also for the safety for our front line workers, like doctors, nurses, police officers, etc.
- Pray for wisdom for those facing financial strains and job searches
- Pray for our church that we would redeem this time, making the most of every opportunity for the gospel, in our own growth and proclaiming to those outside.
- Pray for the people on our **Pray - Plan - Risk** cards
- Pray that we would rest in Jesus, our great High Priest, who laid His life down for us, offering us forgiveness of sin and loving relationship with Him.