

John 12: Surrendered or Self-Serving *Competing Agendas*

John 12.12-19

The “Triumphal Entry”

- ❖ This account is included in all four gospels, with each writer, as is typical, curating the details that are significant to their audience and emphasis of Jesus.
- ❖ This event has been so named because of the manner in which Jesus entered Jerusalem fulfilling prophecy and the response of the crowds to the hype surrounding Jesus and the resurrection of Lazarus.
- ❖ In reality, the agenda of Jesus was completely different from the perceptions of the crowds who acclaimed him.
- ❖ Jesus entered Jerusalem as the King of Peace, died five days later as a crucified criminal, and returned to life as the Victorious Lord—

“Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.”

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

JOHN 20.30-31

- ❖ What is John's emphasis and purpose in including this account?
- ❖ What did he want his readers (including us) to understand about Jesus?
- ❖ What can we learn beyond the familiar details of this event?

It's a New Day!

The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him.

- ❖ Matthew - “a large crowd”
Mark - “many people”
Luke - “the whole crowd of disciples”
John - “the great crowd who had come for the feast”
Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. (v.18)
- ❖ The crowd heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, took palm branches, and went out to meet Him. This was more than a spontaneous event; much speculation and discussion about Jesus had been occurring in connection with the Passover (11.55-56).
- ❖ John is the only writer to specifically identify the branches as palm branches.
 - ▶ Palm branches had been a symbol of Jewish nationalism for 200 years.
 - ▶ Simon Maccabaeus was heralded with palm branches for driving the Syrians out of Jerusalem.
 - ▶ The palm was the Jewish emblem for a conqueror, an identity they associated with the Messiah.

Misguided Ideology

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Blessed is the King of Israel!"

- The acclamations of the crowd are taken from Psalm 118.25-26—

LORD, save us!

LORD, grant us success!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.

From the house of the LORD we bless you.

- John also records an ominous acclamation not found in Psalm 118: "Blessed is the King of Israel!" John's record, with that of the other gospel writers, make it clear that the crowd came to meet Jesus with aspirations of him as their awaited messianic conqueror. In their eyes, the Romans were on their way out!
- At the feeding of the five thousand, the people tried to make Jesus their king. He immediately frustrated their plans by removing himself from their presence (John 6.15). A nationalistic kingdom was not his agenda nor his Father's heart.

- ❖ In Psalm 118, these words of acclamation are preceded by words of prophecy—words that revealed a different intent to God's plan—

*The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
the LORD has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.*

*The LORD has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad. (vss. 22-24)*

- ❖ The Apostle Peter quotes these verses and gives us further insight into their prophetic fulfillment:

For in Scripture it says:

*"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."*

Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,"

and,

"A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. (1 Peter 2.6-8)

The True Agenda

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

*“Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion;
see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.”*

- ❖ Jesus had already made preparations for this moment; it is after these nationalistic acclamations, that Jesus sat on the donkey colt and continued to Jerusalem. John (and Matthew) specifically notes the actions of Jesus which at that moment fulfill the words of prophecy spoken by Zechariah:

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!

Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you,

righteous and victorious,

gentle and riding on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

- ❖ Once again there is an addition to the original words of the author: “Do not be afraid”—only this time we must understand that it is not added by the crowd but by the Holy Spirit, not due to misguided expectations, but to reveal the true purpose of God’s agenda.

- ❖ In quoting from the Old Testament, New Testament writers sometimes combine multiple passages—with the intent that the reader would take note of the entire context of the portions they had quoted. These words, “Do not be afraid,” in a Messianic context, come from two prophets—

*You who bring good news to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.*

*You who bring good news to Jerusalem,
lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;
say to the towns of Judah,
“Here is your God!”*

ISAIAH 40.9

*Sing, O Daughter of Zion;
shout aloud, O Israel!*

*Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
O Daughter of Jerusalem!*

*The LORD has taken away your punishment,
He has turned back your enemy.*

*The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you;
never again will you fear any harm.*

*On that day they will say to Jerusalem,
“Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands hang limp.*

ZEPHANIAH 3.14-16

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!

Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you,

righteous and victorious,

gentle and riding on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

I will take away the chariots from Ephraim

and the warhorses from Jerusalem,

and the battle bow will be broken.

He will proclaim peace to the nations.

His rule will extend from sea to sea

and from the River to the ends of the earth.

As for you, because of the blood of My covenant with you,

I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.

ZECHARIAH 9.9-11

- ❖ Jesus entered Jerusalem, not as a conqueror on a warhorse, but as a king of peace, in a spirit of humility, to bring righteousness and salvation through the covenant of his blood—in just five days.

Prophetic Misunderstanding

At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”

- ❖ John specifically tells us that the disciples did not understand these prophetic events until after Jesus was glorified. Only by the Spirit can we understand prophecy and therefore understand the Filler of prophecy.

“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”

JOHN 16.12-15

- ❖ As in chapter 11, when Caiaphas spoke prophetically—albeit in ignorance, the Pharisees do also. Jesus did not come to be a nationalistic king; He came to be the Savior of the world and ultimately, the King of the world.