

Today, we along with all Christendom, celebrate the Triumphal Entry of Jesus in to Jerusalem on the Sunday before the crucifixion! It is also called Palm Sunday because the people lined the road, praised God, waving palm branches, and threw their cloaks in front of the colt as it passed before them. Long live the King was the meaning behind their joyful shouts; because they knew that Jesus was intentionally fulfilling the Old Testament prophesy. For us, in our time, it is a time of rejoicing and praise to God for sending Jesus into the world to die for the sins of the world. However two thousand years ago the scene and the understanding were quite different. To understand we must go to our scripture reading. According to Luke it was now time for Jesus to go up to Jerusalem and He prepared His way for the entry. Jesus had come from Jericho (where he has healed a blind beggar; he has brought salvation to Zacchaeus' house; and he has told the parable of the King's ten servants...so Jesus was continuing his ministry of healing, giving salvation and restoring relationships; and he is teaching) and now he was a short distance from Jerusalem at Bethphage and Bethany. At that point He stopped until the way could be prepared so that when He entered the city people would know He was presenting Himself as the Messiah. (Before now he has been the humble teacher and healer, now he is showing that he is much more!) He directs two of His disciples to find a colt and bring it to him. We don't understand the

significance of this act, but Jesus was fulfilling Zechariah 9:9-10, which predicted the Messiah would ride on a donkey. That scripture states:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war-horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

The crowds knew this scripture and they did not misunderstand the message behind the symbolism. Apparently even the owners of the colt understood because they allowed the donkey to go with the disciples when they were told, The Lord needed it. Jesus was well known by the people in and about Jerusalem, so just the fact that Jesus needed the animal was word enough to lend it to him for service.

Jesus advanced down the west side of the Mount of Olives toward the city and was praised by the crowd as their Messiah. The act of spreading their cloaks on the road in front of Jesus was a sign of respect. The whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God . . . for all the miracles they had seen. The word translated miracles meant, “evidences of spiritual power.” These believers in the crowd quoted from Psalm 118:26, a messianic psalm of praise:

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.

To announce that he was indeed the Messiah Jesus chose a time when all Israel would be gathered at Jerusalem, a place where huge crowds could see him, and a

way of proclaiming his mission that was unmistakable. The people went wild! They were sure their liberation was at hand!

The people that were praising God for giving them a king had the wrong idea about Jesus. They expected him to be a national leader who would restore their nation to its former glory, like when David, Solomon, and the other great kings reigned. But they misunderstood his reign, mission and purpose. Interestingly enough, the Pharisees also understood the meaning of what was going on and they didn't like it one bit. They told Jesus to rebuke His followers, so they would stop calling him Messiah or King. The Pharisees thought the crowd's words were sacrilegious and blasphemous. They didn't want someone challenging their power and authority, and they didn't want a revolt that would bring the Roman army down on them and the people. So they asked Jesus to keep his people quiet.

Jesus responded that there must be some proclamation that He is the Messiah. If not, even inanimate objects, like stones, would be called on to testify for Him. All history had pointed toward this single, spectacular event when the Messiah publicly presented Himself to the nation, and God desired that this fact be acknowledged.<sup>1</sup>

What can we learn from this and the events that surround it? It was not because Jesus was setting up a powerful political kingdom, but because he was

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<sup>1</sup>Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:253

establishing God's eternal kingdom that he came into Jerusalem that day. We know from history that things can turn around very quickly. People who shout your praises on one day can abandon and hurt you the next day. When it became apparent that Jesus was not going to fulfill their hopes, many people turned against him. But on that day Jesus did announce by his actions that he was the king of kings, and lord of lords, and the Messiah, the anointed one that came to bring salvation and peace!

From our vantage point we can see more clearly than the people of Jesus' day. We know that Jesus is the Christ and is the King that came in the name of the Lord. He had heavenly authority and it was God who sent him. We, like those people that recognized him as king, for that moment, are to praise him! Jesus is blessed forever and we will speak well of Him. Early in Luke's gospel we hear of Jesus' birth with angels singing glory to God in the highest. When Jesus approached Jerusalem the same thoughts are expressed: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. It is God that gave peace and success to the things Jesus did, and it is by accepting Jesus as our King, Lord and Savior that we have peace and success.

We have the privilege and opportunity to give praised to God. We don't want the stones to give praises more than us. When Jesus died on the cross for our sins, the disciples were too afraid to speak up, but nature itself, the clouds and the

rain and the lightening proclaimed him Lord. Join them in rejoicing and giving praise to our God!