

The Tragedy and the Glory of Palm Sunday

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John 12:12-26

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The TRIUMPHAL ENTRY is the HINGE of REDEMPTIVE HISTORY.

- The KINGDOM of GOD makes dramatic steps forward in history.
- Jesus in Matthew 13:31 – [31] *“The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. [32] It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”*

1) The Palm Branches

[12] *The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.*

- There would have been a massive crowd in Jerusalem for the PASSOVER... scholars estimate at probably 2 million people.

So evidently probably thousands of people... a large crowd goes out to welcome him. [13] *So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him,*

- The Palm Branches had come to symbolize national deliverance and HOPE in a MESSIAH.
 - Psalm 92:12 – [12] *The righteous flourish like the palm tree....*
 - *Their understanding is that JESUS is coming to vanquish the Roman occupiers. Thus the Palm Branches.*

[13b] *crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!”*

- They are quoting from Psalm 118:25 – It’s a messianic Psalm. It was a Psalm sung by the Temple choir as the pilgrims would enter the Temple... so it was a Psalm that Jews knew well.
 - [25] *Save us, we pray, O LORD! (Hosannah – literally SAVE US).
O LORD, we pray, give us success.*
 - [26] *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!*
 - And of course He is coming to save them – *not in the way that they think.*
 - If they would have read a few verses earlier... Psalm 118:22 – [22] *The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.*
- *Jesus will save through His rejection by the Jews and through His crucifixion at the hands of the Romans.*

2) The Prophecy

[14] *And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,*

- On the way from Bethany to Jerusalem.... They are coming in from the East.. Towards the Mount of OLIVES.
- And we know from the other GOSPELS that Jesus sent two disciples to Bethphage.
- See Mark 11:1-7

What JESUS is doing – is that He is purposefully fulfilling the MESSIANIC prophecy of Zechariah 9:9.

[15] *“Fear not, daughter of Zion;
behold, your king is coming,
sitting on a donkey's colt!”*

The PROPHECY was made by Zechariah about how a SHEPHERD KING would enter JERUSALEM. *“Daughter of Zion = Jerusalem.”*

- He doesn't come as you would expect a military leader to come. Riding a GREAT WAR HOUSE. Like in REVELATION.
- *He comes riding a humble foal of a DONKEY. The DONKEY represents:*
 - 1) Jesus is coming to establish peace.
 - Zechariah 9:10 – [10] *I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations...*
 - 2) Jesus is coming in meekness.

John notes [16] *His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.*

- *Even the disciples did not understand the significance of this prophetic fulfillment of the donkey in the moment.*

3) The Populous

[17] *The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness.*

- Here's the thought – *If he can raise Lazarus from the DEAD – he can surely accomplish a military coup with the ROMANS.*

[18] *The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.*

- So the other portion of the crowd has not come from Bethany, rather, they have come from Jerusalem... *because they have heard about the raising of LAZARUS.*
- The TWO CROWDS meet one another – and accompany JESUS into the CITY.

What Ends up Happening with the CROWD?

4) The Pharisees

[19] *So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.”*

- There were two group of Pharisees.
 - There was a more radical group who thought that Jesus should have already been dispensed with. Arrested and Killed.
 - There was a more moderate group of Pharisees who wanted to wait and see what Jesus did.
- We know in Luke's gospel that some of the Pharisees confronted JESUS about the Messianic praise he was receiving.
 - In Luke 19:39 – [39] *Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.*
 - Luke 19:40 – [40] *He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent the very stones would cry out.*

5) The Proselytes

[20] *Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.*

- These were people who often went up to worship.
- These are God-fearing Gentiles.
- They hear about JESUS and are very intrigued by HIM.

[21] *So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."*

- Edersheim – Jesus's ministry is bracketed by Gentile worshipers. In a sense there is a theme in JESUS's ministry.
 - It was the WISE MEN @ the BEGINNING – and these GREEKS @ the end.
 - Alfred Edersheim – Not now in the Stable of Bethlehem, but in the Temple, are 'the wise men,' the representatives of the Gentile world, offering their homage to the Messiah.

[22] *Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.*

6) The Purpose

[23] *And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.*

- This is the GREAT SHIFT in JESUS's MINISTRY.
- An hour being not a literal hour, but a very specific purpose of time. All along it has been.... My hour is NOT yet.
 - John 2:4 – [4] *"My hour has not yet come."*
 - John 4:21 – [21] *Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father."*
 - John 7:30 – [30] *So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.*
 - John 8:20 – [20] *...but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.*
- BUT NOW – the HOUR is HERE – the MOST important HOUR in history.

What will happen in the Hour?... For the SON of MAN – the apocalyptic Messiah of Daniel 7 to be glorified.

- Of course it's interesting that Jesus speaks of Himself being glorified in the context of the CROSS.
 - But in a very real sense – the CROSS is the ultimately display of the GLORY of GOD.
 - Exodus 33 – [6] *The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, The LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, [7] keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty.*
 - The CROSS is the demonstration of the NAME of GOD.

Jesus elaborates further.

[24] *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*

- He explains it through parable. The KINGDOM is like a GRAIN of wheat and IOT bear fruit must die in the ground.
 - Isaiah 53:10 – [10] *But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring,*

Jesus then explains the PARADOX of the KINGDOM for us.

[25] *Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.*

- This is a JEWISH idiom.... It means to love something to such a degree your other loves are like HATE.
- *JESUS says you must be willing to love the KINGDOM more and your PRESENT LIFE less to gain ETERNAL LIFE.*

[26] *If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*

- Jesus said, it really is simple – if you want to serve ME – In my KINGDOM.

[27] *“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.*

- Jesus experiences the “troubling of soul” that we should have for not being right with God.
- The WEIGHT of the cross is upon him. The weight of all of our SIN.
- He reminds HIMSELF. He says – for this purpose he CAME. He came to die.

Understanding the Kingdom of God.

- 1) *The Kingdom of God is God’s Rule over His People.*
- 2) *The Kingdom of God Advances through the Cross.*
 - Paul says in Colossians 1:13 – [13] *He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.*
- 3) *The Kingdom of God is Paradoxical.*
- 4) *The Kingdom of God is Already but Not Yet.*
 - It is an invisible Kingdom. Jesus told Pilate in John 18:36 – [36] *“My kingdom is not of this world, If my Kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting.”*
 - *When the LORD JESUS returns it will be both a spiritual and physical KINGDOM.*

Application.

- 1) *Seek the Kingdom First.*
- 2) *Know the Tactics of the Kingdom.*
- 3) *Desire the Future Kingdom.*