

John, Part 35 – Jesus, Messiah and King

John 12:12-50

At the conclusion of the last study, the Jews and the chief priest plotted to put Lazarus to death because many people began following Jesus and believed in Him. John 12:12 begins the triumphal entry of Christ. Those who had turned to Jesus were ready to exalt Christ and make Him King of Israel.

John 12:12–13 NKJV ¹²The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: “Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ The King of Israel!”

Beginning at John 12:12, we are shown Christ’s Triumphal entry into Jerusalem and very little about the Passover crowd. The verse says “a great multitude” of people came to the Passover feast in Jerusalem. Josephus, the Jewish historian, estimated that two to three million people were present for this Passover Feast. Some say there were 256,000 lambs sacrificed. A Pascal lamb was offered for every ten to twenty people. When Jesus celebrated this Passover in Jerusalem, there were 13 present in the upper room with Him.

People from all over the world flooded into Jerusalem. Passover was a great time of celebration for every Jew. The atmosphere was naturally filled with celebration. Things were different at this Feast of Passover celebration because the multitudes had heard the report of Lazarus and the appearance of the Messiah.

There was a general false concept about the mission of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

Many believed that Jesus was coming to take the throne at this time and rule and reign on earth.

Matthew 24:30-31 tells us that a day is coming in the future when “they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

The triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem was not that great day.

First, “a great multitude” welcomed Jesus in the triumphal scene.

They thought Jesus was their earthly King and Savior. They could not see the difference in Jesus’ second coming in power and His coming to secure salvation on the cross. They believed He would bring paradise or utopia to earth for people at that time. No one present understood what Jesus was about to do. Their Messianic hope was for a political and warring King who would cut off their enemies and bring peace on earth.

Many of the Old Testament prophets spoke of Christ coming in power and great glory.

Zechariah 9:9-10 NKJV “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be ‘from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.’”

Although Old Testament prophets were shown many details of the Messiah, they did not have a clear understanding of the time this would occur. The majority of the Jews did not understand the death and resurrection of the Christ. They were looking for a Redeemer to come in power to conquer evil and set up an earthly kingdom.

Second, the people “went out” to welcome Jesus.

They were ready at that moment to put Him on the throne, but He knew that He was headed to the cross to be the Savior. *When He returns the second time, He will come as King.*

Third, the people waved and laid palm branches before Him.

Palm branches were a symbol of victory and triumph. When warriors returned in victory, people would welcome the conquerors with palm branches and shouts of praise.

The people were crying out: “Hosanna!” Hosanna has a dual meaning. To many Christians “Hosanna in the highest” means, “we praise you!” or “Praise be to God!” “Hosanna in the highest” has become a high praise. The closest translation of the Aramaic and Jewish text means, “Help” or “save now, we pray.” The multitude was calling for Jesus to be their Triumphant Conqueror. “Come and help us!” and “Save us from our oppressors!”

Jesus was coming into their city to provide salvation and deliverance, but not the way they expected. Everyone wants to be free from oppression and tyranny. This is the cry of many people today. We all want freedom and peace on earth.

The general misunderstanding of Christ’s mission was also witnessed in His disciples.

John 12:16 NKJV His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

His disciples did not understand what Jesus was doing until after His resurrection and ascension back to the Father.

The celebration in Jerusalem must have been tremendous. People came out to see Lazarus whom Jesus had called out of the tomb and raised from the dead.

Remember that Jesus told His disciples, Mary, and Martha that they would see the glory of God.

John 12:18 NKJV For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

John 12:20 NKJV Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast.

The report of Lazarus being raised from the dead spread throughout the region. This was the Lord’s last miracle before the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. The events of Christ’s earthly ministry were coming to an end and Jesus was wrapping them up in glory.

John 12:14-15 NKJV Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: “Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey’s colt.”

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey, He was dramatically showing everyone that He was the King and Savior.

It is important for us to understand that God’s ways are not our ways, and His timing is not our timing. In order to provide salvation and redemption, Jesus had to go to the cross.

Romans 5:1 NKJV ¹ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:13-14 NKJV ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation.

Jesus came as the Prince of Peace and Savior of the world.

He did not come to fulfill the people’s cravings or worldly ambitions. He came to seek

and to save that which was lost.

The Pharisees were filled with despair and rage because everyone was turning from them to Christ. The streets were crowded with people who welcomed Jesus as the Messiah. The Pharisees said: *“The world is gone after Him.”*

Jesus’ enemies thought He had come to conquer the world.

Every pilgrim in the city was caught up in the excitement. Between Bethany and Jerusalem the road was lined with crowds of people. They were all crying for their Savior. They did not understand the way of the cross or the victory Christ was about to win.

John 12:20-22 NKJV Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

The mention of Greeks is significant. Their coming represented the world going after Jesus. When they came for the Passover Feast, they heard of Jesus and what had happened to Lazarus. It appears that John 12:23-50 is spoken to these Greeks and Jesus’ disciples. Jesus had been working toward this decisive hour in time.

John 12:23 NKJV But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.”

“The hour” refers to Christ’s death, burial and resurrection. The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. He was not going to receive the glory of an earthly king. He would receive glory through the cross. Through death, God would exalt Him as King.

John 12:27-28 NKJV “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”

Once again, Jesus was showing His disciples that He was going to die. First, He spoke about a grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying, but after it dies, it produces much grain. Then, He said, “He who loves his life will lose it.”

Jesus wanted those present to know that this was the reason for His coming. These words are similar to Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. In the Garden, He surrendered to the Father’s will and prayed, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will,” (Matthew 26:39).

When He said this, the Father from heaven responded in an audible voice that all present heard. God said, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.” Jesus told them, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake.” God wanted everyone present to know that the events that were about to transpire were ordained by Him and that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

John 12:31-32 NKJV Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.”

Jesus said this to signify how He would die.

Philippians 2:8-11 NKJV ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus knew that His being lifted up on the cross would bring the salvation of the world.

Colossians 2:15 tells us that He “disarmed principalities and powers and made a public spectacle of them by triumphing over them in the cross.

John 12:36 NKJV These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

Except for the words of his address at his trial, these were His last words spoken to the public. There is a sense of urgency and finality in this last appeal. It is noteworthy that after all that Jesus had done and said, the multitudes of the people did not believe.

John 12:37-41 NKJV But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.” These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

Think about this.

- God the Father spoke audibly from heaven and they all heard the sound of His voice, but they did not believe.
- Lazarus had been raised from the dead and was standing before them, but they did not believe.
- All of Christ’s miracles and wonderful words of life were not enough to persuade them to believe in Him.
- Although their hearts burned within them when He spoke to them, most of His audience did not believe.

Isaiah’s prophecy was being fulfilled before them. Jesus was despised and rejected and they turned from Him. Unbelief blinds the eyes and hardens the heart. They were so sunk in sin that even when they heard the truth it did not bring them closer to God but actually drove them away. It is critical for each of us to have ears that hear what the Spirit says.

This message is a reminder of Genesis 6:3 where the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever.” Jesus was giving His audience another opportunity to see, hear and know that He is God’s promised Savior, Redeemer and Messiah.

John 12:44-48 NKJV Then Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.