

The Church of the Servant King

Survey of the Bible Series – The Gospel of John (SB_JN12B_Jesus Enters Jerusalem In Preparation for Death)

The Messianic Entry into Jerusalem (12:12-19)

Until this “hour,” Jesus had restrained or counteracted all spectacular public attempts to acknowledge Him as Israel’s king (see 2:4; 6:15; 7:6a cf. 7:9; 7:30; 8:20 as examples). However, His “hour” (12:23, 27, 31 cf. 13:1, 31; 16:32) had now come when He needed to enter Jerusalem and be recognized and acknowledged as Israel’s Messiah. His entry into Jerusalem on that fateful Palm Sunday was accompanied by shouts of praise that were extracted from Psalm 118:25-26 (cf. Lu 19:37-40). Contrary to the manner in which He avoided such public accolades in the past, on this occasion He prepared for the occasion by securing the colt of a donkey (Mk 11:1-7 cf. Jn 12:14). By so doing, He fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9.

Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My **hour** has not yet come.’ (Jn 2:4)

Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. (Jn 6:15 – *setting: after Jesus fed the 5000 near the Sea of Galilee and just before He walked on the Sea to His disciples*)

Then Jesus said to them, ‘My **time has not yet come**’...When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee. (Jn 7:6a & 9)

Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because **His hour** had not yet come. (Jn 7:30)

These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for **His hour** had not yet come. (Jn 8:20)

But Jesus answered them, saying, ‘The **hour has come** that the Son of Man should be glorified. (Jn 12:23)

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**. (Jn 12:27)

Now is the judgment of this world; **now** the ruler of this world will be cast out. (Jn 12:31)

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that **His hour had come** that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. (Jn 13:1)

So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, **Now** the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. (Jn 13:31)

Indeed **the hour is coming**, yes, has come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. (Jn 16:32)

Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord. (Psa 118:25-26)

Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!' And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher rebuke Your disciples." But He answered and said to them, 'I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.' (Lu 19:37-40)

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.' (Jn 12:14)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! [*Jerusalem and its people*] Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! [*the inhabitants 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. [*Verse 9 – fulfilled in Jesus' 1st Advent*] I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim [*the Northern Kingdom of Israel*] and the horse from Jerusalem, the battle bow shall be cut off [*implements of war – chariot, horse, bow – destroyed*]. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River [*the Euphrates – the northeast boundary of the promised land*] to the ends of the earth. [*Verse 10 – fulfilled in Jesus' 2nd Advent*] (Zech 9:9-10)

The preparatory event for the crowds to be willing to acknowledge Him was the resuscitation of Lazarus. Many of the Jews had believed in Jesus as a result and many had been going to Bethany to see Lazarus whom Jesus had raised. Imagine the scene – the Jerusalem area packed with pilgrims, Jesus having just raised Lazarus from the grave and the excitement among the Jews over such a miracle. Contrast that image with the vile, seething anger of the religious leadership as they observed their world about to crumble beneath their feet (12:10, 19 cf. 11:47-53). A crowd of Jews accompanied Jesus as He began to make His way to Jerusalem. They eventually merged with another crowd of Jews that flocked out of Jerusalem to welcome Jesus (vv. 12, 17, 18). As they welcomed Jesus, the merged crowd tore down branches of palm trees and even threw down their own cloaks to pave His path. They cried out the words from Psalm 118:25-26 – "Hosanna [save now], blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!"

However, what kind of deliverance do you think they had in mind? When did they expect this "salvation" or deliverance? Were they consciously aware of the Scriptural sequence of events that would have to transpire in order that all prophecy be fulfilled? Not hardly. John even notes that the disciples saw no immediate connection between Jesus riding the colt into Jerusalem and His identity as the Messiah prophesied in Zechariah. It was not until after Jesus was glorified that they remembered the things that were written about Him (Jn 12:16). If the disciples who had walked and lived with Jesus for a period of about three years did not grasp the fulfillment of Scripture that was occurring in front of their eyes, it is very unlikely that any of the crowd did either. Neither group, the disciples nor the crowd, would have properly interpreted these events as a fulfillment of the Zechariah passage, much less would they have seen the relation of the Zechariah passage to other prophetic passages regarding Jesus' first Advent (e.g. Psa 22; Isa 52:13-53:12).

Jesus represented the earthly king they desired – a powerful political leader who would restore Israel to a position of superiority. Their shallow understanding of Scripture and their emotional basis for their actions would soon manifest itself. It is very likely that this same crowd would be among those who cried, "Crucify Him!" as they saw Him beaten, despised and seemingly helpless after Pilate's attempt to appease them with an offer of an alternate common thief. Surely, this could not be their Messiah.

Questions for personal meditation: Before you studied the Jesus of Scripture, how was your view of Jesus derived? How much has your view of Jesus changed as you have learned more about Him from Scripture? Is there a difference between the two perspectives of Jesus that you have held? Are you open to the possibility that there may be additional adjustments to your view of Jesus that God will lead you to see if you are yielded to His instruction through the Word and the Spirit?

Jesus Teaches the Principle of Spiritual Reproduction (12:20-26)

Here is more Scriptural evidence of Gentiles being drawn to Yahweh in exactly the manner in which God had intended, i.e. through Israel's witness as she observed God's specific rituals, ordinances and holidays. Other examples during Jesus' lifetime include Matthew's record of the visit of the magi from the East to Bethlehem when Jesus was a young child (Matt 2:1-12), probably about two years old (Matt 2:16). Later, in Jesus' public ministry, we see a Roman centurion who is a man of faith (Matt 8:5-13) and a Gentile woman whose daughter Jesus heals because of her faith (Matt 15:21-28). There were perhaps many other instances not recorded in Scripture of Gentile believer proselytes that Jesus encountered directly or indirectly during His life and ministry on earth.

The fact that the Greeks were seeking Jesus is directly related to Jesus' conclusion that His *hour* had come. Now, not only the Jews, but the Greeks [Gentiles] were seeking Jesus through His disciples. This was the pivotal point in Jesus' career. This was the hour in which He should be "glorified" (v. 23). However, what Jesus meant by "glorified" was entirely different than what the crowds would have desired. Jesus was referring to the strategic victory that needed to take place prior to any lesser tactical victories. The strategic victory was the payment for man's sin through His spiritual death thereby accomplishing propitiation of the Father's righteousness (among other things) and victory over physical death through Jesus' resurrection. This strategic victory placed Jesus and believers in a position of power to achieve tactical victory at the 2nd Advent and in their daily decisions, respectively.

Had Jesus not yielded His will in obedience to the Father's plan for His life, there would have been no reproduction of His life in any man or woman, Jew or Gentile. Jesus explains one of the great paradoxes in God's plan – without His death in obedience to the Father, there could be no reproduction of His life. Jesus uses the kernel of wheat to illustrate this truth as it applies to Himself and as it applies to His followers. Jesus is the original grain of wheat from which every other grain of wheat (believers) is reproduced. Thus, Jesus is the bread of life.

Principle: If the kernel of wheat does not die, it does not reproduce.

Application: If the believer does not die to self through yielding obedience to the Father's will, the believer will not reproduce and will be fruitless.

Principle: God's plan for the grain of wheat – when a grain of wheat reproduces, it reproduces an identical grain of wheat.

Application: God's plan for believers is that they are reproductions of the original grain of wheat – Jesus.

Principle: When the believer dies to self, he or she does not lose his or her personality and individuality. Rather, the personality becomes all that God intends it to be, a reflection of His Son vs. a self-centered individual just like the rest of the world.

Application: What are two or three areas of your life in which you have died to your self-centered orientation and thereby become oriented to Christ? Men – do you love your wife as Christ loved the Church and died for her? Wives – do you respect your husbands and desire to

honor them as you would honor our Lord? How do you use your money? Your time? Your energies? Your thoughts? Do you ever step back and observe how others may view your actions and decisions? Do they reflect an image of Christ? What areas of Biblical instruction have you rationalized to conform to your own selfish orientation? Only when we die to self in these areas will we truly find life, peace, joy and contentment (Matt 16:25-26).